# MYSTERY MAGAZINE

VOL. IV No. 85 MAY 15, 1921

PRICE 10 CENTS

## A CLUE OF FLAME

A DETECTIVE STORY

BY JACK BECHDOLT

"THE FACE IN THE CROWD," by Marc Edmund Jones, will appear in No. 86

# MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. IV. MAY 15, 1921 No. 85

Copyright, 1921, by Frank Tousey, Publisher, New York. All rights reserved. Entered as Second-Class Matter November 5, 1917, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Published Twice a Month by

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher

168 West 23d Street, New York

N. Hastings Wolff, Pres. E. Byrne, Treas.

Charles E. Nylander, Sec.

LU. SENARENS, Editor

NOTICE—No letters will be answered or manuscripts returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. The publishers disclaim responsibility for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts. Authors must name price wanted for submitted material.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE:

| | |
|---|---|
| Domestic, Single Copy | 10 Cents |
| Domestic, Yearly | $2.50 |
| Canada | $2.75 |
| Foreign | $3.00 |

All remittances should be sent by express money order, P. O. order, check, registered letter, or draft to insure safety. We will not be responsible for money sent otherwise.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURE STORY

A CLUE OF FLAME. By Jack Bechdolt..... 1

SHORT STORIES

ONE CRIME BEGETS ANOTHER. By Detective Bob Larkin..... 13

FROG HOPKINS, GHOST. By Eugene A. Hancock..... 16

AFTER MANY YEARS. By Richard Harrington..... 19

WAS HE THE ASSASSIN? By Gertrude St. Andrews..... 22

THE BLACK SATCHEL. By Charles Montague 24

MISCELLANEOUS MATTER

DANCING FURNITURE..... 12

BAALBEK THE MYSTERIOUS..... 25

$4,000 SILVER LOOT DUG UP FROM CAVE 25

CURRENT NEWS

Psychological Effect of Colors on Prisoners—Babies Play with Snake—First Railroad Out of Chicago—Immortals in Tree Hall of Fame—Astral Vamps Prowl—Early Use of Metals—Literary Impostors—Crucified in Good Friday Rites—Carving of Christ's Head on Bean 26

# A CLUE OF FLAME

## A Detective Story

By JACK BECHDOLT

### CHAPTER ONE

HOLDEN NORTH closed the door carefully. His face was grim.

"It's murder," he said, "murder that brings me to you."

He shook his friend, Chief of Detectives Ford Markman, by the shoulder, emphasizing his message.

"Murder, Markman, and you must help me!"

"Holden! You mean that you——"

"God forbid! Yet it involves what I value more than my own life, the happiness of the woman I love.

"Last night you met Joyce Calvin, my fiancée. You know we plan to marry soon. This morning she was called to her home at Cortlandt Kills by news that her father is accused of a foul crime. Markman, all I hold dear is at stake. And I have come to you for help."

Detective Markman shook his gray head.

"Tut, tut, North. What you want is a lawyer. If Joyce Calvin's father is accused, your only way to help him is the law. He must know——"

"Whatever he knows, he is not here to say. John Calvin is a fugitive from justice. No, Markman, what I need is your help—man, you must help us. Think of Joyce!"

"Poor girl."

"Markman, you did a wonderful thing in the case of that young student, Fletcher. When you unraveled that campus murder you showed yourself capable of thinking straighter than all the other police detectives in New York. And that Lidgerwood affair! Now I come to you in the

name of poor Joyce Calvin. I'm asking you for her—and for myself. You will help us?"

"Help you? Of course! If there is anything I can do——"

"Oh, come," North exclaimed impatiently. "We both know better than that. You can help. I need you. I want you to go with me to Cortlandt Kills, to examine the evidence in this terrible charge against John Calvin. I am as certain of his innocence as I am of his daughter's—but it needs a keener mind than mine—the best reasoning in America. I know, Markman, that few officers of the law have done the things you can do. And I'm asking you for friendship's sake.

"Come, come, that's enough. My friends need not beg of me, Holden. First, sit down and give me the facts, what you know of them at least. Let's see if there's a chance."

Markman bustled to the windows, raising the blinds and flooding the room with sunshine. This done, he motioned North to an easy-chair and curled himself into the capacious seat of another. He eyed his friend with a bright glance. One would have guessed that inwardly he was delighted with the situation. In a sense that was true, for shocked as he might be at the misfortunes of two dear friends, Ford Markman found the most vivid pleasure in matching his wits against intricate problems of real life.

A professor of mathematics in the University of Manhattan, for years he had found recreation in the reading of stories of crime. But Ford Markman discovered all too soon that his keen wit could outmatch the fiction writer's and these imaginary problems were too easily solved. It was then he turned his talents to puzzles that baffled the police and press. In this field he had done several remarkable things. More and more his interest centered on the unraveling of crime mysteries. In this he found recreation for a mind too keen to trifle with works of the imagination.

"I scarcely know how to speak of this terrible thing," Holden North began slowly. "It seems tragic beyond belief. Only a few hours ago the three of us were together, you and Joyce and I—our little theater party, the late supper, our happy parting. Remember, I told you I was the happiest man in all the world? Now I feel as if none was more miserable—except Joyce! Poor little girl——"

"Come, Holden, we're here to help Joyce. Now what is it has happened? Why is Joyce Calvin's father a fugitive from justice; who accuses him of murder—and who has been murdered?"

"Here's what I know, what Joyce told me over the telephone. John Calvin, as I have told you before, conducts a business at Cortlandt Kills. He lived there all his life and the business was left him by his father. He sold realty; placed mortgages; handled insurance for the country around; invested savings for various clients. He was a sort of unofficial banker, adviser and friend to at least several hundred families. There was never any question of the honesty of John Calvin—nor of his father. He is a man past fifty, loved and respected by all his neighbors. He owns a house and grounds of considerable size and is reputed to possess a modest fortune in money and securities. John Calvin is about as capable of murder as—as Joyce. He is a mild-tempered, mild-mannered, lovable father and friend. For years he has made it an annual custom to entertain the entire town and nearby countryside at an annual picnic held in his grounds on the river. He's a staunch churchman and a liberal giver to charities. He's just the sort of fine, old-fashioned American I would be proud to be, and yet——"

"And yet, as you say, he is accused of murder and a fugitive from the law," Markman commented.

"Yes," North nodded miserably, "he is—by heaven, I can't understand it! It—it's unspeakable—outrageous."

"And the murdered person," Markman prompted.

"A man—a youngish man named Price—Ben Price. I've seen him a few times—spoken with him occasionally on my visits to Cortlandt Kills. Ben Price was a clerk. He was employed by Calvin—had been for a number of years. A tall, sallow, inconsequential sort of fellow. Single. Didn't drink or misbehave himself in any way I know of, nor was he a church member or identified with any particular social activity. Just a commonplace, ambitionless, rather innocuous sort of person with the mark of clerk all over him. About all I recall of him was dreamy brown eyes and rather a weak mouth. Well, Ben Price was murdered last night. His body was found soon after dark—found in the private office of John Calvin. He had been struck or clubbed on the head. And Calvin is gone."

"Not necessarily incriminating—might be coincidence," Markman murmured.

"True enough—but that's not all. It seems that about a week ago Calvin discharged this Price. Price had been his confidential clerk during fifteen years—often took entire charge of the business. Then this sudden disagreement. Joyce told me last week that Price was angry at her father—that he had made remarks about the village derogatory of her father and his methods of doing business; that her father publicly warned Price to cease his slander. There was a scene between them—a quarrel and threats on both sides. Made quite a stir as such things will in a little town. Then, after the discovery of the murder, a number of witnesses recalled that John Calvin was in his office the entire evening up to within a few minutes of the finding of the body. You see, Markman? It looks bad—bad—and yet I know that John Calvin is an innocent man."

"But he has run away. What a tragic mistake! If he is innocent, why——"

"Yes, yes, I know!" North groaned. "But, Markman, that's the question we must answer—that is why I came to you. There is an explana-

tion of this thing—must be! And upon the finding of that explanation depends Joyce's happiness—and mine. Markman, I do not exaggerate when I tell you this tragic suspicion will ruin two lives unless it can be lifted. Joyce Calvin is too highly strung, too sensitive ever to recover completely from this stain upon her father's name. And her suffering is my suffering. You will—you must untangle this!"

"Well," Markham declared, stirring briskly, "we can't do anything more here. Five minutes, Holden, and I'll be ready."

## CHAPTER TWO

"GENTLEMEN, it looks mighty bad for John Calvin."

Dr. Watts, the coroner, polished his glasses with a grave face. North and Detective Markman were closeted with him in his consultation and operating room, a curious combination of easy furniture and unpleasantly suggestive operating table, ether cones, instrument cases and glazed and nickled and enameled and polished machinery for dissecting the human body.

"I don't say this in any official capacity," Dr. Watts continued. "And I don't say it publicly. But as coroner I have been investigating preparatory to the official jury hearing on the death of Ben Price and what I have discovered—what I know myself—by gad, Mr. North, I'd give a bit to be out of this! John Calvin—John Calvin! How could he——"

"I know from Mr. North that you are an old friend of Calvin's," said the officer persuasively. "If it is not betraying the confidence of your office to tell us."

"Not a bit of it. You are welcome to the information I have—it is public property. If there is anything, any fact, which can be twisted to the benefit of my old friend—if you can find in this evidence any gleam of sunshine for that poor little girl of John's, by George, sir, you will have made one man happy!" Dr. Watts found it necessary to polish his spectacles afresh.

"I've set the facts I gathered down in a notebook," the doctor went on. "Preparing for the inquest, you see. According to these the body of Ben Price was found in John Calvin's office at 9:45 last evening by Lafe Jackson, janitor of the Union Block—that is the office block of the village, as you know. Ben Price was then living—I should say, rather, he was dying."

"Conscious?"

"No, sir. Jackson says he tried to get him to speak—of course, Jackson is a muddle-head and he was mightily upset—scared stiff naturally and no real use! Well, it seems that Jackson was sweeping the hall outside Calvin's door. He thought John was in the office because earlier in the evening, about five minutes after eight, Mrs. Jackson saw him enter there. Mrs. Jackson was cleaning the place and Calvin asked her to put off the work, as he would be engaged in going over some papers and expected to be there until past midnight. Mrs. Jackson told that to Lafe, and when Lafe heard a groan from behind that door, he thought Calvin must be ill. He unlocked the door with his pass key——"

"He was certain the door was locked, doctor?"

"The door has a spring lock—the circumstance augurs nothing. And, instead of John Calvin, Jackson found Ben Price stretched on Calvin's rug, bleeding from a wound on the head and unconscious. Jackson thinks he spent about five minutes trying to do something for Ben before he came to me."

"To you!"

"Yes. I was in Luke Perrin's cigar store at the corner of the Union block, talking to Luke and John Hicks, our constable. I made a note of the time—it was ten when Jackson called us. Within five minutes we were back in Calvin's office and by that time Ben Price was dead. Must have died while that fool Jackson was shivering and quaking and trying to tell us what had happened."

"Would you say Price's wounds were very recent, doctor?"

"I wouldn't undertake to say except in terms of hours, but he had not suffered long, I am certain."

"Jackson noted no evidence of Calvin's presence in the room when he discovered the body."

"No sir, but I did."

"You?"

"When we returned"—Dr. Watts leaned forward, his voice lowered impressively—"I made a search of the place as soon as I saw that Ben Price was beyond help. I found this." He drew from his desk a broad-brimmed black felt hat of old-fashioned block and quite well worn.

"Calvin's!" North exclaimed.

"Yes, John Calvin's, and, gentlemen, when I picked up this hat I noted that its band *was still warm*. It had not been off John Calvin's head ten minutes."

"Why John Calvin's head?" Markman questioned snappishly.

"Who else's head?" asked the doctor. "My dear sir, John Calvin's hat does not fit——"

"Stuff!" Markman scoffed. "Pure supposition—taking the thing for granted."

"If you think for a moment I would take for granted any circumstance that tends to convict an old friend!" Dr. Watts glared indignantly.

"Oh, come, doctor! I mean no reflection, but that's the sort of error in reasoning that leads many a man astray. For all we know the murdered man might have worn that hat—or the murderer. Loose thinking."

"I'll have you know, Markman, I'm thinking as clearly as God will let me. The fate of an old friend is not such a slight thing to me."

"I don't doubt it for an instant, and please

don't mind my frankness," Markman apologized with a disarming smile. "Come, doctor, any sounds heard from Calvin's office other than this groan? Sounds of a blow—or words—any quarreling?"

"Not that I know of. I can find nobody who heard any."

"And Calvin? You're sure he was in his office last night?"

"Dead sure. In the first place, as I have noted it here, at 7:35 Constable Hicks met John Calvin a couple of squares from his home and spoke with him. Calvin said he was on his way to his office to catch up some work. Within ten minutes John met Abijah Lee, president of the Cortlandt Bank, and mentioned to Mr. Lee that he was on his way to the office and would spend the evening there. When he left Mr. Lee, a square away from the Union Block, he must have come direct to Luke Perrin's cigar stand at the corner, for Luke says it was only two minutes or perhaps three minutes later, 7:47 o'clock, that John stopped in to buy two five-cent smokes. He mentioned to Luke that he would be obliged to work late over some papers and the cigars would keep him awake better than coffee. About three minutes after eight Luke saw John enter the Union Block door. At five minutes after Mrs. Jackson saw him open his office door; that was when he asked her to put off her cleaning work until morning in order that he might work undisturbed."

"Admirably presented," Markman smiled. "And that is all?"

"Isn't that enough, sir?"

"It scarcely proves that John Calvin did not leave his office during the evening, some time previous to the killing of Price, which you say could not have been very much earlier than ten o'clock."

"Well, then, I *know* he didn't leave."

"You know!"

"I do. I shall have to testify to this, I suppose, so you are welcome to the information. At five minutes of nine o'clock John Calvin telephoned to me. We had made an engagement to go over some business connected with insurance papers—I serve as examining physician for the company John represents. John told me his work would require the entire evening and asked to be excused from our engagement. Probably half an hour later I walked from my home down the street to Luke Perrin's store and as I passed the Union Block I glanced up at the windows of John's office. A light was burning and the blinds were drawn. I saw the shadow of a man move across the blind.

"I knew that shadow! It was silhouetted clear. It was the shadow of John Calvin!

"I reached Perrin's two minutes after I saw this shadow and it was then a quarter of ten."

"Good lord!" Holden North turned a haggard glance on both men. "But I won't believe it of John Calvin," he said.

"Why should you?" smiled Markman. "Nothing proved so far. But, doctor, as to a motive for the crime."

"That," said Doctor Watts, "is what makes it look blackest for John Calvin."

---

## CHAPTER THREE

TOWARD six o'clock that evening Detective Markman and Holden North turned their steps toward the old-fashioned residence of John Calvin, where Calvin's daughter, putting her faith in these dear friends, waited their report with pitiful patience.

The day's investigations added little to what Dr. Watts had told them, but that was bad enough. Even Markman seemed to lose some of his optimism.

The complete detail of the circumstantial evidence against old John Calvin, coupled with the bad feeling between him and his former employee, Price—a bad feeling that had ended in a public quarrel and threats of violence—made matters look dark.

And John Calvin's flight was the finishing touch. In public opinion the man was as good as convicted and on his way to the electric chair.

The friends were silent, busy with their own thoughts. As they turned into the driveway of the Calvin home a woman ran from the front door of the house to meet them.

She was Joyce Calvin, a brown-haired, brown-eyed girl of unusual beauty.

In her hand she bore a sheet of paper. Her face showed evidence of great excitement.

Markman was first to take the paper the girl proffered in breathless haste. He read it with grave interest and passed it over to North.

"Outrageous!" North cried when he had scanned its contents. "Markman, there's something sinister about this!"

Joyce glanced anxiously from one to the other. "What shall we do?"

"When did you receive this—and how?" asked Markman.

"By the last mail. Here is the envelope. You can see it is postmarked from the village. Do you think that people—these people we know—oh, surely these neighbors and friends, none of them, would do such a thing!"

The message was on a sheet of foolscap paper and composed entirely of type letters cut from a newspaper and pasted painstakingly to spell its warning.

"If you value human life do not sleep in your home again, nor let any other pass the night there. This warning is sent in deadly earnest. Obey it."

The envelope, which received Officer Markman's special attention, was addressed to Joyce Calvin, at her home, in the same scraps of print

used for the body of the message. Except for its postmark of Cortlandt Kills it had no identifying mark.

Holden North's eyes gleamed angrily. "It's a plot!" he declared, "a miserable, underhanded trick by somebody—some enemy of John Calvin—intended to frighten us. And why? Because somebody is afraid we shall find the truth! Markman, that's it, they're afraid of us!"

"Perhaps," Markman nodded. "And again—it might be in earnest, as it says."

"What should I fear in my own home!" Joyce exclaimed.

"You needn't fear anything," North assured her. "We'll look after that, eh, Markman?"

"We'll do our best." The detective looked serious. "Yes," he added, "we'll look after you, Joyce. And we'll stay on right here in your own home until we find a mighty good reason for leaving. Fact is, that's probably the wisest thing we can do. If this warning is in earnest—as it might be—it would be very interesting to know just what would happen if we disregard it—and who would make that thing happen."

"Exactly. Just as I said," North exclaimed. "Somebody sent this thing—and he had a reason. If it isn't to frighten us and done out of a spirit of pure mischief—and that's an absurd notion—the reason behind it has something to do with Joyce's father. Markman, you and I had better see this thing through. After dinner Joyce can leave quietly, we could put her up at a hotel or some friend's."

"No," Joyce spoke firmly. "If you two stay I'll stay. If anything happens that bears on this warning I want to know all about it. No use shaking your head, Holden, I'm going to stay!"

Unexpectedly Markman concurred. "Joyce is right. We'll see it through together."

After dinner Markman conducted a thorough examination of John Calvin's house. It was a dark, drafty old place of more than a dozen rooms. Some of these rooms, littered with discarded furniture and odds and ends of past years were not in use. Markman's conscientiousness in examining everything took much time. It was ten o'clock when the search was done.

"We'd better all go to bed," the detective advised.

"Bed! As if I could sleep!" Joyce's exclamation was bitter.

"Or I," North added.

"Well, I don't expect to sleep much myself," Markman explained. "But so far as appearance goes let's seem normal. Are we going to give some idle mischief-maker the satisfaction of thinking he can frighten us! Joyce, there's only the one servant?"

"Only Hilda at present."

"Tell her not to undress completely. Let her have a cloak or robe of some sort handy in case of alarm—let's all of us be ready to appear in public without loss of time. I don't expect anything to happen, but if it does——"

"Good-night to both of you." Joyce smiled wanly and turned toward the door of the library where the search had ended.

"Joyce, just a moment." North passed through the door after her.

"He'd best leave her alone," Markman sighed. "Time will mend a great many things—including heartaches."

To North the passing of night seemed interminable. He lay wide awake, fully clothed, staring blankly into the darkness. The old house was full of whispers and signs after this warm fall day. Timbers contracted; now and then a shingle snapped; the boards of floors and stairways creaked of their own volition.

In the room across the corridor Detective Markman lay apparently in a peaceful doze. North envied him that sleep. But, he reflected, Markman could sleep. Markman had escaped all personal injury from Joyce Calvin's tragedy. It was he, North, who suffered. His tired brain rehearsed the details of the busy day. A hundred times he tried to reason from the accumulated evidence some explanation of Ben Price's murder that would absolve Calvin—and a hundred times found himself convinced of the hopelessness of that task.

Despairing of sleep he rose, finally, and walked to the open window to breathe more refreshing air. Glancing idly into the murky shadows below his eye caught a stealthy movement. A body of some size was passing silently around the house. It might have been a dog judging by first glance, but in a moment he knew it for a man.

North slipped quickly from his room. At Markman's door he paused to whisper the professor's name. There was no answer. Fearful of wasting a moment North hurried on alone.

He let himself quietly into the night by the front door. His feet were bare of shoes and his stockinged soles made no sound on the gravel as he padded after the prowler.

All the way around as far as the kitchen wing North passed unopposed.

There he hesitated a moment, wondering if perhaps he had not been mistaken. There came to him a faint sound—a sound as of a window being lifted very slowly and gently. He tiptoed on, keeping in the shadow of the wall.

So unexpectedly that his advancing hand almost touched him, North was aware of a man ahead of him. He checked a start of surprise, but he could not totally check one whistling breath that responded to the leap of his heart.

The man turned with a cat-like quickness. Almost in the same second North leaped for him. The collision of their bodies was noiseless. They went down entangle. North was on top and his fingers sought for the other's throat.

The man on the ground was no mean opponent. His leg rose suddenly, doubled at the knee. North took the blow in the small ribs and his wind went out of him.

A powerful arm wrapped itself about his

shoulders and seemed to pluck him aside easily. A moment the advantage was his; in a flash it was North who was under. Then something else happened.

Another man leaped out of the shadow of the house and stumbled across the combatants. North heard his quick gasping breath, felt the impact of his boot toe. Then this second man passed on, leaping the entwined bodies. His footfalls died away quickly in the tall grass.

Almost instantaneously the man who held North was on his feet and in pursuit. North rose slowly, his head spinning. As he sat up he saw that the man who had held him had given up his chase and turned back. "Too late," North heard him growl. "Now for a look at this one."

"Markman!" North was on his feet at the sound of that voice.

"Good heaven, Holden? What in the name of sanity——"

"Well, how about yourself! Hang it, man, you nearly broke my ribs."

"That's nothing. *My* neck!" North saw dimly that the detective was feeling himself with tender care. He explained what had brought him into the night.

Then it was Markman's turn. "I must have come down fully ten minutes before you," he said. "Been watching from my window. Saw a fellow in the shadow—same as you saw me. He wanted something here, that was plain. I watched him force open a window and crawl in—then you catapulted yourself onto my back. Between us we frightened him away."

"What could he want here?" North puzzled.

"Who knows?" Let's examine the house, but I'm afraid there's little hope of explanation."

Markman was right.

The visitor had left no trace so far as they could see.

Nothing to reveal the purpose of his midnight errand, so they returned to the house and to bed.

---

## CHAPTER FOUR

DETECTIVE MARKMAN dreamed he had gone into the woods with a camping party—a diversion which, in waking hours, he abominated. He was elected cook. In one hand he balanced a frying pan filled with bacon and potatoes; in the other a coffee pot. He was trying to hold the frying pan in the flame and at the same time set the hot coffee on the coals without spilling it. Every time he set down the coffee pot it threatened to topple over. And every time he righted the pot the frying pan turned in his grasp, spilling out food.

And in his dream, all the time Markman struggled with frying pan and coffee pot the fire of wet wood smoked and smoked and the wind blew the acrid cloud directly in his face. He did not see the others in his camping adventure but he could hear them shouting at him. At first he thought they were telling him to hurry the cooking and he became ridiculously angry, then it seemed they were advising him—warning him.

The smoke made him cough so hard that he wakened. He realized that the smoke was real. Dream had vanished into more startling reality. His room was filled with smoke and somebody was stumbling toward him, calling his name—Holden North.

"Yes, yes," Markman exclaimed. "What is it, North?"

"Fire. Hurry—no time to look for clothes. Ready? Come on then—and you, Joyce?"

The halls were choking with smoke. Joyce and the servant Hilda stumbled along beside them. In the lower corridor there was a reddish glare and the crackling of a busy flame. For an anxious moment they struggled with the unfamiliar latch of the front door—after that the night air felt marvelously cool and sweet in their lungs.

They could see in a glance that the home of John Calvin stood in imminent danger of total destruction. As they looked there came a great puff of fire from the rear of the house. Window glass flew tinkling and the broad flames bannered out, lighting the shadowing trees, the lawn and the huddled refugees with a weird, ruddy radiance.

Holden North walked slowly back toward the ruins of John Calvin's home. Dawn was breaking, gray and chill.

His first care had been Joyce and the servant girl, Hilda. Them he took to a neighbor's and lingered beside his fiancée, comforting her, reassuring her until he was certain she could rest.

The fire was out.

A cloud of smoke and steam lingered over the charred timbers and hot stone and the lawn was littered with odd bits of furniture and articles of value, saved by enthusiastic volunteers.

North sought Markman. He had not seen the detective since the moment they stumbled together through the front door. Of one or two bystanders he could get no information.

He wandered stupidly about the grounds, occasionally calling Markman's name. When he had left to take Joyce to a refuge Markman had bade him be sure to return. North wished heartily he was in bed. He was tired, chilled and cross.

Suddenly from the ruins of a window emerged a begrimed, almost unrecognizable figure that answered his call with a voice unmistakable. Ford Markman, the distinguished criminologist, at that moment needed soap and water worse than at any period of his life. Soot and char encrusted his clothing and all his visible flesh. His gray hair was dyed black with charcoal. He lacked coat or shirt at the time of his escape from the fire and he had not since remedied his costume. Once white linen was now gray and black like his hair and skin.

"Gracious father!" North exclaimed petulantly. "Where in the world have you been? You look as if you'd been—wallowing."

"I have," Markman admitted, sucking a burned finger. "Also I've been grubbing a bit."

"No need to tell me! But why?"

"Look here, Holden, I've got something—something that looks as if it might help us. Waited till the crowd was gone to come out with it. We've got to keep this to ourselves just now. But I think it's going to be of some use to us—a clue."

"A clue!" North's lassitude was gone in a second. He was electrified with a new interest. "What—what is it—let's see it!"

Detective Markman held forth a double handful of fragments, bits of hot glass and porcelain; some wisps of partly burned cotton, a broken plate.

Laying this rubbish on the ground, he fitted bit to bit with a happy industry, until he had sketched roughly a glass phial, a plate and a wad of cotton.

"What in the world do you call it?" North demanded, indignant at the thought he was being hoaxed.

"Well," said Markman, gravely, "looks to me like the remains of a clever incendiary bomb—the thing that burned John Calvin's house."

"You are certain that thing was a bomb—intended to start a fire in the house!" North looked at the charred rubbish incredulously.

"Very certain," said Markman positively. "Not that the scraps are sufficient proof. The nature of the fire tells me even more. An incendiary fire, Holden, almost invariably betrays its origin. If one studies the ruins with a trained eye he will see that the flame has been over-fierce, over-intense in the spot where the fire was started. In Calvin's home, for example, a great hole was burned starting below the ground floor, boring straight through that floor and the ceiling above and the ceiling above that, even as far as the roof itself. That means there was a pillar of intense, concentrated heat, cutting like the flame of a blow torch. It bored that hole much faster than the flame spread across the building. And at the spot where this pillar of flame began I found, as I expected, these scraps. To me they suggest that a considerable reservoir of some very inflammable oil—say benzine—was placed there.

"Just how this oil was fired I am not certain. At a guess I would say that a phial or several phials of acid were arranged in such a way that when they were released and mixed combustion began. There are many types of fire bombs of that sort."

"What a hellish trick!"

"Not a very Christian act, certainly. Luckily we were warned."

"Markman, I think I see now what's behind all this." Holden paced excitedly. "John Calvin has an enemy—a bitter enemy—who will stop at nothing. He is accused of a terrible crime; for all we know he may have been kidnapped as well to make circumstances against him seem even more conclusive; finally his home is burned. Does that not show the hand of some plotter?"

"A thoughtful plotter, then," said the detective. "At least he was good enough to warn us he would burn the house."

"The most devilish plotter would not endanger innocent lives," North argued. "And, Markman, it was that man who came last night! How plain it all is. If I hadn't blundered you would have caught that fellow and today we'd know the answer to all this——"

"Assuming that our midnight visitor really planted the bomb," Markman smiled and shook his head gently. "Good reasoning, Holden, but not satisfactory to me. And yet I have no better solution to offer—as yet."

"And I'm sure I'm right," North declared. "Today I'm going to investigate John Calvin's relations with every man, woman and child in this community. When I find who hated him worst I shall find the source of all this——" He completed the sentence by a wave of the hand toward the desolation about them.

"Good," agreed Markman. "Good! Do that. And meantime I have a little idea of my own to follow out. We'll meet later."

Before they met again something more startling, more puzzling, than any previous act in John Calvin's drama had occurred.

John Calvin was found and jailed.

He refused even one word concerning himself.

---

## CHAPTER FIVE

CONSTABLE HICKS had found John Calvin. A boy brought word to the village that some person was hanging about Calvin's deserted little summer camp on the lake road. Hicks went to the place and discovered the fugitive.

Calvin surrendered without a word. He seemed like a man stunned.

The frantic pleas of Holden North, the tearful appeals of his daughter fell on deaf ears. He would not say even that he was innocent of the crime charged against him.

"He must talk! Markman will make him talk," North declared after a long and hopeless visit to the prisoner in the village jail. But Officer Markman, when finally he returned to the hotel where the two friends had taken lodgings after the fire, gave as little satisfaction as Calvin.

He showed little interest in Calvin's arrest; less in Calvin's silence.

"I can make him talk—in time," was all Markman would promise. Then he added unexpectedly: "But, Holden, it may cost you quite a bit of money."

"Money!" North's eyes blazed scornfully. "What do I care how much it costs! You know I'm pretty well fixed, Markman. If there's any

amount—any amount up to the total of all I've got that will solve this mystery, clear the name of John Calvin and bring back happiness to Joyce, take it—use it!"

Markman nodded.

"Very good. I thought you'd feel that way. Suppose you write me a check——"

"Certainly. For how much?"

"I don't know. Leave the amount blank. Leave the name of the payee blank also. Just number it and sign it. Have you that much faith?"

For a moment North stared. His stare brought out no more information. Then he shrugged his shoulders and prepared the check as requested.

"Thanks," said Markman noncommitally. He folded the check and put it in his pocketbook. "You may not see me for some time, Holden."

With this the chief of detectives put on his hat and left the room. He left the hotel and the village and, good as his word, he was not heard from for ten days.

They were ten days that tried Holden North's faith in his friend to the utmost.

The money he thought no more about. He trusted Markman to use it for the happiness of all concerned.

But the suspense was dreadful, the waiting from minute to minute, hour to hour and from one long day until the next for some word of cheer which never came.

Public opinion of Cortlandt Kills condemned John Calvin as a guilty man.

Friends who had known "Honest John" since boyhood turned against him. All manner of wild rumors were flying as to the condition of his affairs. Clients who trusted him prepared to invoke the courts for an accounting. It would have been a very difficult undertaking to find within a radius of a hundred miles one man so impartial and unbiased in his views that he could have given Calvin a fair trial.

Joyce ceased to appear in public except to drive to the little jail. Then she rode heavily veiled.

Holden North had abandoned all pretense of his old optimism. Except that he hoped still for good news from Markman, the young man was almost as distracted as his sweetheart. And daily his hope of Markman dwindled.

A telephone message reached North at his hotel. When he recognized Markman's voice over the wire his face brightened wonderfully, though there was little encouragement in Markman's message.

"Bring Joyce to the jail," Markman said. "I'll be there. We will talk with Calvin."

"You've found the way—you know how to make him speak?" North exclaimed.

"Don't hope for much," Markman answered sharply. "And not a word to encourage Joyce. I won't have her hopes raised only to be cast down. But this is our one chance—our hundred-to-one shot."

Calvin sent them word he did not care to see them when announced by the jailer.

"Did you say to him Miss Calvin is here?" Markman asked.

"Told him about Joyce," said Hicks. "Didn't seem to make any difference. If y'ask me, I think he's getting worse off. Something up here—bad." Hicks tapped his forehead.

"That's all silly rot," Markman boomed angrily. "Keep your opinion to yourself, constable. Joyce, you go to your father. See that he comes here."

Calvin entered the little office reluctantly. "I tell you I won't say a word—you are wasting time," he insisted, shaking his lowered head stubbornly.

"You sit down," Markman roared. His order was brutal in its directness. Calvin started and a trace of color stole into his pallid cheeks. A moment his eyes met Markman's glare.

"Sit!" hissed the detective. He pointed a commanding finger at the bench. North stirred uneasily. Joyce began a protest. Markman silenced them with a look.

John Calvin suddenly obeyed. Again his gaze concentrated on the floor.

"Hicks, you stay. I want a witness here," Markman ordered. "Now, John Calvin, listen to me."

Markman placed himself directly in front of the prisoner. His manner was accusing, stern.

"You stand accused of murder," he began solemnly. "Before these witnesses I, who have investigated your case, tell you you are guilty—guilty as sin!"

Calvin's big frame quivered as if an electric shock had passed through him. But he made no answer.

"Guilty," Markman charged passionately. "For you I have no pity. A murderer's death you deserve."

"Markman!" North rose angrily. "This—this must stop. I tell you——"

"Be still, Holden. Sit down. You, Calvin, listen. Your sins have found you out. You shall pay—pay for a cowardly and foul deed. And not only you must pay—an entire community must pay.

"John Calvin, you have lived many years. You labored to keep bright the honest name your father earned for you. You were a man loved and respected in this village and all about it. Widows came to you with their savings, confident of your honesty. Fatherless children depended on your integrity for their bread. Men in hard luck turned to you for aid—and you helped them. You were a good neighbor and folk honored you for it. More, because you were good others were turned by force of example to honest ways. To the church you were a firm support and your example guided others to thoughts of God. In your time you built something, Calvin, a temple of truth and honesty that was finer than any material temple built in this place. And suddenly, in a spirit of evil, with deliberate intent, you have wrecked the work of your life. The temple is down, in ruins.

For one man your example has turned to good, two are turned to evil, for the force of evil is infectious a hundredfold as much as that of good and you have disillusioned the men who leaned on you in their need of support—you are the rotten reed that they thought their staff. Your temple is down and the work of a lifetime is undone—worse than undone. Far better your whole life had been given to evil that men might have known you for what you are and been warned! You have betrayed the trust of your Maker! God put you here to turn men to the light and you—you have led them astray."

Calvin's broad hands covered his face. He shook with an awful sobbing. Those who watched could not bear the sight of his agony.

"Daddy—daddy!" Joyce sprang to protect her father. Her arms went about him and held him tightly. She turned an indignant, scornful face upon Markman, her body interposed between them as if she would shield him from a lash.

"Damn you, Markman, I say cut that!" North seized his friend's arm savagely. His face was white and dangerous with anger. Markman fought hard to shake loose his grip.

Even Hicks was shaken. "My gosh—my gosh—my gosh," he murmured and wiped his forehead with a shaking hand.

"Stand aside," Markman ordered, flinging North roughly from his path. "Aye, Calvin, you suffer, do you? What is your suffering to atone for the suffering you have brought? You do not pay alone—all your neighbors who trusted and admired you—your daughter, the daughter who holds you so fast, what of her? She will pay, for she must live on bearing your name—bearing the name of your wife in the grave—a name dishonored."

Calvin was on his feet with a hoarse scream. "Damn you—damn you—damn you! I—I could kill you for that. I—I—oh, God, this is true. This is my punishment. I have sinned. I have done wrong, but not—but not——" He stopped abruptly. The old stubborn look came into his face. "I can't talk—why should I talk? Who would believe me. No—not a word."

"Oh Calvin, by the way," Markman's tone was so casual that they all stared, thunderstruck. "Here's something I forgot—a letter that came for you. Read it." Markman actually smiled, as calm and unruffled as a May morning. The sudden change in him was a shock to them all even greater than his fervid denunciation. Calvin held out a hand for the letter. He opened it. He began to read, for he was completely under Markman's will.

At first that letter seemed to mean nothing to Calvin. Then there came into his eyes a look of puzzlement; the pupils widened with surprise. The haggard face softened and began to quiver with excitement—hope.

"Joyce," said Calvin suddenly, "Joyce, you—you read—this. Tell me what it says. I—I can't believe——"

"My Dear Mr. Calvin," Joyce began, "I'm glad to be able to tell you that we have found a purchaser for your hundred shares of Great Bison stock and our check for twenty-five thousand dollars is enclosed. You will note we were able to sell at par. Recently I advised you that such a sale was impossible. If it were not for the evidence of this check I would still hold to that opinion. Your good fortune in unloading this lot of stock is perhaps one of the most remarkable instances in my years of experience with the odd chances of the stock market. Truly yours,

"Brokaw & Brokaw,
"E. M. Brokaw, pres't."

"Let me see—let me see the letter," Calvin clamored. He took the paper with trembling hands, feeling it between his fingers as if he doubted its reality. "It is real—true—it has actually happened," he stammered. "In my darkest hour—when I had no hope—it is real——"

"Yes, and the check appears to be quite real," Markman commented. "Brokaw & Brokaw are reliable brokers."

"The money—I've won—won it back. The money is safe!" Calvin's voice sank to a shaky whisper. "Then I've not lost—I've not betrayed my trust—I am honest. Oh, thank God for that! I can make good every cent."

Markman laid a kindly hand on the prisoner's shoulder. "Then the wrong you did will be righted; it is no longer a wrong—you have done no wrong," he argued. "Come, come, Calvin, I know what this means to you."

"You know!"

"I know this much. You have made foolish investments with other people's money—funds trusted to you by your neighbors. You thought you had lost it all. Instead of the sudden wealth you expected, you saw only disaster—disgrace and ruin. Whatever else it was involved you in this murder charge, you blamed it on yourself—you thought it just punishment for a sin you now find you never committed. Now, in the name of this innocent daughter who is suffering for you, in the name of your neighbors and friends who would rather believe in you than against you—a thousandfold rather—I ask you to tell us the truth about the death of Ben Price. Your acquittal is a matter of more importance than your own personal safety—it involves the happiness of others. You must talk for their sake—tell it all so that we can aid you."

"But—but that is impossible—nobody can help me. I—I'm netted, Markman, netted fast. Yet I swear to heaven I'm innocent of that crime. My hands are clean."

"I knew! I knew! Oh, dad, I believed in you—always!" said Joyce, happiness in the tone.

"Come, Calvin, in the name of that girl clinging to you—for her sake, you must tell it," Markman insisted. "Tell it," he repeated more sternly, "or I will."

Calvin's eyes flashed surprise.

"You know?"

"I can guess nearly all—yes, I think all of it, now."

"I'll tell." Calvin's head went up. "I'll tell the truth, nothing else. You shall have it all, but"—he groaned wearily; his head sank—"nobody will believe me," he muttered. "Nobody ever will believe me—there is no proof—no hope of proof. I'm caught—caught in the net I myself wove—a net of lies!"

---

## CHAPTER SIX

JOHN CALVIN rose from his bench. He faced them all gravely. In an impressive tone he began: "What I am about to tell you is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God. I have been accused of the murder of Ben Price—of that crime I am as innocent as this girl beside me, nor can I tell you anything that will throw light on that mystery. Detective Markman argues that a sudden chance makes me innocent of any crime. That is not true. Chance has made it possible for me to correct the wrong I did—and those who would have suffered are safe. But I did wrong and I still feel that it is my punishment to find myself involved in such a position as a man never before faced. I can't hope to gain by this statement. Unless the real slayer of Ben Price is found I have no hope of escaping his penalty—but I shall make public the truth. I see now that I owe that to those who are dear to me."

"North," Markman whispered, "take that pad and pencil and note the salient points, please."

Calvin sighed. "I was an honest man," he began slowly. "I gloried in the trust others showed me. I tried according to my best judgment to keep safe the money my clients gave me to handle. And I prospered. Yet, after a lifetime of honesty and caution, I was tempted by the lure of the stock market.

"My business always brought me in slight touch with securities and gradually I began to find an interest in studying the quotations in more speculative investments. For some years I found a harmless diversion in that. Harmless! If I had only known then that thousands of poor fools start just the way I started! I began to follow the market, to play a system—not by risking actual money, but on paper, for my own diversion. And on paper I always won. That started me, finally.

"At a time when I needed money suddenly I plunged with cash that was not my own. I won. The temptation came again—oftener. Need I repeat all the details? Within the past two years I became more and more involved. I lost my own money and the money of others. I found myself facing a serious shortage. Almost any day the storm threatened to break. One inquiry from my clients here, one demand for their securities, and any time within the past three months I would have gone under!"

Calvin paced anxiously, his hands entwined. He looked old and very tired.

"It was at this time," he began with sudden energy, "that I discovered something about Ben Price which led to a break with my old clerk. Ben Price began with me when he was scarcely more than a boy. I thought for years that I knew all about him. Then a chance discovery shocked me. I found that Ben was keeping bad company. Evenings and holidays he went to the city. He gambled and when he won his money was spent with fast companions. Ben, the quiet, likable fellow we all knew here, was a far different man in his hours of leisure. And those habits were telling on him. Sooner or later the evil side of him would gain ascendancy. I warned him—twice. He disregarded my warnings. Finally came the break between us.

"I discharged Ben Price because of my own business reputation. God forgive me that I should judge him—I who was a greater gambler than he. But I did judge him—and he left my office.

"You know how Ben talked; the things he hinted about the village. I was angry with him—and frightened. I was afraid of what Ben Price might know about my own secret vice—the stock market. Once, when we quarreled publicly, I would have struck him. I was prevented then—thank heaven for that—and since then we never exchanged a word. That public quarrel was my last meeting with Ben Price until I found him, in my own office—dead!"

"What, you found him?"

"You!"

North and Hicks, the constable, stared open-mouthed. Joyce Calvin shrank against the wall, her brown eyes dilated and black with excitement.

"I found the body of Ben Price," Calvin repeated. "That was the night I was driven by my fear into premeditated crime."

"Crime! Oh, dad, not a criminal."

"I planned and executed a criminal act—this punishment is just," Calvin muttered, his head hanging. "I was desperate—almost insane with fear my financial shortage would be discovered—fear that some idle rumor might bring all those who trusted their investments to me clamoring at my door. I had but one resource left—my house, the house my father left me. It was insured, heavily. I determined to destroy it—to defraud the insurance companies. In a vague way I hoped some day to repay them—to salve my conscience—as if a man could drop that burden once he has done wrong!

"I plotted the crime—the burning of my home—and the devil himself seemed to give me cunning. There was to be no mischance—no idle clue or overlooked slip that would betray me. Joyce went to the city, the guest of friends. I was alone that evening for Hilda, our servant, had been called home to a sick mother.

"Long before I had happened on an article describing incendiary bombs and the methods of arson. I constructed such a machine, a device that

could be placed in a building and left to do its work.

"With the instinct of the criminal I saw that my need was conclusive proof of innocence—an alibi. I thought I had my bomb timed in such a way it would operate within two hours of its placing. So that evening, after I had sent Hilda home, I went to my office to get the machine. I made it a point to speak with as many persons as I encountered. I mentioned to them all that I would be busy until past midnight, catching up work. There was Lee the banker, and you, Hicks; I met both of you on the street."

"That's right enough. I remember that darn well," Hicks volunteered eagerly.

"And Luke Perrin, I bought cigars there. Mrs. Jackson was cleaning my office. I dismissed her with the same story. Then I remembered Dr. Watts with whom I had made an engagement. I telephoned to him, telling the same lie. Until nine o'clock I stayed in my office, making a pretense of work, completing the details of my crime. At nine o'clock, the hour was striking from the city hall tower, I slipped out of the side door of the office and from the rear door of the building. I carried my infernal bomb under my coat. I walked through the alleys, like a thief."

"Oh, dad!"

"Like a thief," Calvin repeated in bitter self-condemnation. Not a soul saw me go home, I am sure of that. I placed the bomb and made my way by a roundabout route back to the office. I saw nobody. It was ten o'clock when I got into the alley door of the Union Block. After listening carefully to be sure nobody was in the halls I stole up to my own office side door."

Calvin paused. There was a look of terror in his face. His voice became husky with emotion. "I opened my door quietly and entered—gentlemen, this is the truth! I entered and there—there on the floor—on the rug between my desk and the safe, lay—lay a body—Ben Price! He was dead—murdered!"

Again Calvin paused. He wiped his face, now wet with a sickly moisture. His listeners waited, fascinated.

"I think that sight actually stunned me for a moment. I lacked the power to move. Finally, in a shaky way, I made sure that Ben was dead—that nothing could be done for him. Then I sat down in my office chair—sick. But my brain kept working. I saw clearly, a long way ahead. I realized the trap I was in. Do you understand—as I did that night? Can you see it?

"I was trapped. I had trapped myself—trapped myself by that clever alibi I was so careful to build up. By that very tissue of circumstantial lies I had proved to reputable men that I was spending the entire evening in my office—that I would not leave my office—and in that office murder had been done in my absence. Ben Price was murdered and half a dozen honest men would swear that I was in that room when he met his death!

"I saw no way out of it—no way! Prison, disgrace, the electric chair stared me down wherever I looked. The longer I gaped at that dead man lying there on my rug, victim of a brutal attack, the blacker things looked. Then came the noise of several men at the office door! I heard Jackson and Dr. Watson. The murderer himself could not have fled as guiltily as I. Out the side door, down the back stair of the building and into the dark alley again I went in a terror almost insane. I had no thought but to get away—away—anywhere.

"I remembered the old place on the lake road. Few people come near it. I went there and hid—and the hours of my hiding there were black and bitter as the tortures of hell.

"Next morning I remembered the fire bomb I had set in my house. A terrible fascination—a thirst to know what damage it had done—drew me back. How I escaped observation I do not know. I came as close as a mile to the village, to the hill above the lake road. From there I could see my home—standing, unharmed! Then I knew that something had gone wrong with my machine—that I had blundered. And I remembered Joyce—knew that she would be called home by the news about Ben Price—by the suspicion attached to my disappearance. So I prepared a letter of warning."

"The letter I got," Joyce exclaimed.

"You got it? If only I had known that, what a terrible day that would have saved me.

"When the letter was sent all sorts of doubts worried me. I was afraid the letter would not be found; that it wouldn't be put through the post in time; I was afraid if it was found that its unusual appearance would cause suspicion, possibly the delay of an investigation. At last, late at night, I could resist my fears no more. I came back again. I stole into my own house. I felt that I must know if the machine was still there. If possible I intended to remove it. But before I had reached its hiding place I heard a sound from the lawn. I thought I was discovered, but when I peered from the window I saw two men struggling."

"Markman and me," North explained. "What fools we were, or rather what a fool I was!"

"I saw you. I had to get away. I took a chance and escaped before either of you was on his feet. The rest you know. I was glad when Hicks came for me—glad to be sure of my fate. I tell you I was resigned to death—to paying the penalty for the murder of Ben Price. It seemed a fitting end to me. I had no hope. But this—this sudden chance of the stock market—I can make good all my losses through that. People cannot say that John Calvin is a thief! Now—why now there is something to hope for—to fight for. And yet, gentlemen, who will believe me?"

"Why, they must believe you, dad. Everybody knows you speak the truth—who can doubt!" Calvin shook his head at Joyce's eager assurance.

"Once they would have believed," he mourned.

"But now—they will say he lied once—he admits that—why should we believe this preposterous story? I am afraid, Joyce—afraid."

"I believe," said North. "Markman knows you speak the truth—he knew as much without hearing your story."

"Well," said Hicks slowly, "'tain't my place to comment, of course. But it's a darn interesting story—by gosh, it is that—interesting!"

"Hicks," Calvin questioned, "if you were on a jury would you believe that story—acquit me?"

Hicks pondered several minutes. He scratched his head, looking very uncomfortable. Finally, "Mr. Calvin, I'd a darn sight rather not answer that—if you don't mind."

"You see?" Calvin smiled bitterly.

"The truth," said Detective Markman, "usually is hard to accept. Remember the old saying about truth and fiction, yet it is truth that triumphs in the end. I know what Calvin says is true because I have proved it"

"You have proved it!"

The exclamation was general.

"Just as I have proved who murdered Ben Price. Presently you'll see I'm right. The man who murdered Price was one of his city companions. The quarrel was about money, I suppose. The two were together the day of Ben's death, I know that. They came to Cortlandt Kills to rob Calvin's safe; I know that by my own investigations in the city. I also know where this man is—in a jail. Very cleverly he got himself arrested on a trumped-up charge of selling cocaine. He figured that jail was the place he would least likely be suspected of his crime. All these things I have proved to my own satisfaction, thanks to John Calvin's one act—his return to his home to recover the fire machine that did not work on time. And thanks to my own interruption which prevented the machine's recovery and brought it afterward to my attention. I know these things."

"My gosh, can you prove them?" asked the practical Hicks.

"I will prove them, in time."

Calvin groaned in despair.

The telephone bell interrupted. When Hicks answered he came back with staring eyes.

"Proved!" he shouted. "Proved, every word of it, like he says. That was the county attorney. Acting on the detective's tip he's been after this man Renfrew—Ben Price's pal. And Renfrew confessed. They robbed Calvin's safe when Calvin was out of his office, fought about splitting up the money and Renfrew killed him. John Calvin goes free!"

It was some time later that Chief of Detectives Markman got Holden North aside.

"That check of yours," he explained. "I'm afraid it's cost you a pretty penny—twenty-five thousand, to be exact. It was that check bought Calvin's worthless stock and squared his account."

"Cheap at the price!" North answered. "But the old man still insists he's guilty of arson and will demand a trial."

"You'll never find a jury in Cortlandt Kills to convict him," Markman said positively. "That's another certainty."

North thought over the remark and gradually his face cleared. "You're right again," he exclaimed. "They will never convict him!"

"And I'm not sure they should, Holden. John Calvin has paid already and he will continue to pay to the day of his death, pay for the one mistake of an otherwise honest lifetime. He is the type of man who is his own court, judge and jury and we need never doubt his remorse nor his reform. And now, I suppose, you and Joyce have it all settled to join your hearts and fortunes, eh? You'll not need a detective to help you there."

"And that's where you're wrong for once!" North exclaimed. "Without you as best man there can be no wedding. You'll not fail us?"

"Not all the crime and criminals in the world can prevent my helping on that occasion," Markman declared heartily. "Do you think a detective never tires of troubles and the wrong side of life? It's that contrast makes our moments of real happiness shine twofold, Holden. Without some clouds the sunshine would grow stale for us all!"

---

## DANCING FURNITURE

A representative of the Psychic Research Library of Boston and First Selectman Edward E. Kent started independent investigations of mysterious happenings reported at the home of Mrs. Sedley Lowd, Londonderry, N. H. According to Mrs. Lowd and others, chairs and heavier pieces of furniture perform sudden gyrations, buttons take flight from a work basket into the air, and table forks and stove wood shoot through windows without warning. The psychic research investigator, it was announced, would make his visit contingent upon the Lowd family's consent.

The occurrences, as reported by Mrs. Lowd, her son Herbert, and their neighbors, have stirred the town to such an extent that the selectman felt he ought to obtain some first-hand information if possible. Since the alleged peculiar manifestations began early in the week, the home of Mrs. Lowd has been besieged by inquisitive persons and self-appointed investigators. Their presence has not been entirely convenient for the family, as they have insisted on exploring every corner of the house to find the cause of the phenomena. Now they are confronted with a sign on the front door saying: "Keep away."

# One Crime Begets Another

By DETECTIVE BOB LARKIN

POSSIBLY you have read of Morton, the expert English forger, who operated in the United States, and particularly in the cities of New York and Philadelphia, some years ago.

It was my fortune, or perhaps I might better say fate, to be employed by his victims to hunt him down.

Morton was badly wanted in London, England, and on the continent of Europe, where he had operated with a skill and daring seldom equaled, previous to his début on American soil.

He had baffled the American detectives, and two Bow street graduates in the art of criminal-hunting had crossed the water after him, only to return disappointed and chagrined.

The Johnny Bulls swore the forger was in league with the evil one, or they could have had him long ago, but they would not admit that any American detective possessed the skill necessary to run down Morton.

I took hold of the case at a time when there was but little prospect of success in securing the crook, for he had been hunted so long, and was so well informed regarding the detectives, that he possessed every advantage for escaping by being constantly on his guard.

I had in my possession a photograph, which I was assured by the English detectives was an accurate and reliable picture of the forger as he really appeared when not in disguise. Morton was a very master of disguise, rivaling the detectives themselves in this accomplishment of Proteus.

No doubt he owed his many escapes to this power of assuming a clever disguise; and rumor had it that his wife was a remarkably astute and cunning woman, who had more than once secured her husband's safety by "throwing dirt in the eyes of the bulls," to put it in their own expressive way.

I had received a verbal description of Morton's wife, but had been unable to obtain a picture of her.

As the gentlemen of my profession had vividly "word-painted" the forger's wife, I thought that I had her quite accurately photographed on my mind.

For several months Morton seemed as difficult to locate as the omnipresent yet everywhere invisible Irishman's flea. And although I had followed up several good clues closely, they had thus far come to naught.

It was on Saturday night, and I was about to close my office preparatory to returning home, when a message from a Boston correspondent—a member of the National Detective Association—reached me.

Upon perusing it all my plans changed as if by magic, and, having sent word to my family, I boarded the first train for Boston.

My correspondent met me at the depot in that city, and, as he had already informed me in his written communication, he now stated verbally that he was satisfied that Morton was in that city, and that we should find him that night at a certain house on a disreputable street which shall be nameless here.

At midnight we were within the building in question, which was a gambling-house kept by a man who had served a term in State prison for counterfeiting.

The place was a resort of the worst criminals of the Eastern cities, and the game was patronized only by crooks.

My friend and myself were pretty well disguised, and we felt no particular fear in venturing there, for we had taken our lives in our hands and ran desperate chances too often to weaken at anything short of actual confrontation with certain death.

Presently we spotted our man in the place, and we were edging towards him when suddenly every light was extinguished and Morton's voice shouted:

"Now, then, boys, kill the two fly cops!"

The crooks made a charge at us, but we whipped out a pair of automatics apiece and made for the door, sending a shower of bullets ahead of us.

Well, we got out of the room and escaped, but it was a close call for our lives, and taught us a lesson of caution which we did not soon forget.

Next day, while seated in my friend's office alone, during his temporary absence, a young lady, possessing a graceful figure but closely veiled, so that her face was perfectly concealed, entered the office.

"I believe you are Mr. Fox?" she said, in a sweet, gentle voice that was exceedingly pleasing in its clear resonance of tone.

"That is my name, miss, or madam, as the case may be. Please be seated," and as I thus spoke I placed a chair.

The lady sank into it gracefully, and the fragrance of violets filled the room, as the perfume was exhaled from a bunch of these flowers at her waist, for it was in the springtime—the season of flowers.

I noticed that the lady's hand trembled a little, and that she partially raised her thick veil in order, as I supposed, to facilitate her breathing.

Of course I understood it all. She apparently wished to conceal her identity from me.

I waited for her to open the conversation.

She seemed overpowered with emotion, but at length she said:

"I can place in your hands one whom you seek to capture."

"To whom do you allude?"

"To George Morton, the English forger," she replied promptly.

"Ah!" thought I. "I wonder if this dame has been sent here to play the part of a decoy, or is she here from other motives?"

Whether she was a fraud or acting in good faith I, of course, could not determine.

"How can you place Morton in my power? Who are you? Please explain," I replied.

"I will do so, sir, to a certain extent; but as to who I am, that must remain a secret between us. I am one who hates George Morton, and it is hatred that prompts me to betray him into the hands of the officers of the law.

I meant to see her face, and, leaning back in my chair, I touched a heavy weight, and it came down upon the floor from the book-case, just grazing my head.

For all the world as though I had been struck by the falling weight, I sank upon the floor and remained motionless.

The lady thought I had been knocked senseless, for I did not stir, and finally she arose, and, raising her veil, she bent over me and I caught a fleeting glimpse of her face.

Then I staggered to my feet with my hand to my head, and said with a stifled groan:

"A severe blow."

For the moment I was astonished at the discovery which I had just made, for the woman was the living duplicate of the wife of George Morton, whose picture I carried in my mind.

Was the woman, then, surely a decoy who was acting a clever part?

I could not think so, for there was an impassioned, half-despairing air about the young woman which I do not think the most accomplished actress could have assumed. She did not know that I had caught a glimpse of her face.

I now possessed the advantage of knowing who she was, and was puzzled to account for such conduct on the part of Morton's heretofore recklessly devoted wife. But I reflected, and it occurred to me that jealousy, neglect, or something of the sort might have for the time turned the love of the forger's wife to hate.

I determined to gain all the information from her I could, and doubted not that when I had heard her story I should be the better able to judge of her sincerity. Unfortunately for her, and myself as well, at this precise moment a breathless messenger came rushing into the office, who exclaimed as he entered:

"Come with me instantly, Mr. Fox. Mr. Pollock is dying—was shot trying to arrest Slick Darby, the cracksman!"

Pollock was the name of the Boston detective. I turned to the lady.

"This is certainly most unfortunate, madam, but I cannot remain to hear what you have to say at this time. Call here in the evening at five, or in the morning before twelve, or tell me where I can meet you."

"I will call at five this evening," said the lady.

I hastened from the office, and followed the messenger who had announced the calamity which had befallen my friend.

As I passed into the street I saw a man running hastily away, and there was something in his skulking manner that for the moment aroused my suspicions that he had been shadowing Pollock's office.

But thoughts of what had befallen my professional friend put everything else out of my mind.

I followed the messenger who had brought the news of the shooting, and as we went along I questioned him.

The messenger—a shrewd-looking young fellow—answered up promptly enough, and I had no suspicions of him until suddenly he stopped, turned short off to the left, ran down a blind alley and vanished through a door in what seemed to be a stable wall.

I rushed after him, but on gaining the door in the wall I found it was secured. I could not open it.

Somewhat crestfallen, and enraged as well, at the simple way in which I had been taken in, I returned to the office.

I suspected now that the woman who had come to inform had been followed to the office by friends of the crook, George Morton, or by himself and another, and that they had overheard all.

"God help the poor woman! If she was acting in good faith she will never keep the appointment she has made with me," I thought.

I knew Morton well enough by reputation to be confident that he would hesitate at no crime, however terrible, in order to insure his personal safety. Half an hour later my friend Pollock appeared at the office. He was uninjured. The message regarding him was a falsehood.

Pollock was amused at my narration of what had transpired during his absence, and he agreed with me that the forger's wife would in all probability be seen no more.

What had occurred went far towards assuring me that the woman had been acting in good faith.

Now, however, we had lost track of Morton, and were consequently powerless to take any steps in the way of protecting the lady.

Two days later the Boston newspapers announced a mysterious death.

The article was headed in the somewhat sensational manner peculiar to the daily press:

"WAS IT SUICIDE OR MURDER?"

And it ran as follows:

"This morning the body of a lady known as Mrs. Foster, who occupied furnished rooms in the

house, No. —— North C—— street, was found dead in bed with a bottle marked 'Prussic Acid' beside her.

"Deputy Coroner Alberts made an examination, and discovered that the lady came to her death by a dose of the poison.

"Whether this is a case of suicide or murder there is some doubt. The husband of the lady has disappeared."

"The police are investigating the matter, and it is hoped that the mystery will be fully cleared up before the coroner's jury, which will assemble to-morrow morning."

The locality mentioned in this brief article as the residence of the victim of that most virulent of poisons—prussic acid—was a highly respectable one, and the furnished rooms rented there were elegantly furnished and expensive.

Something prompted me to visit the locality, as I wished to satisfy myself that a vague suspicion which the perusal of the article had awakened in my mind was not well founded.

Arriving at the house, I found that after viewing the remains the coroner had ordered that the body be removed to his office, where the inquest would be held.

I was not to be baffled.

Therefore I repaired to the coroner's office.

Making known my profession, I was permitted to see the body.

As I suspected, the dead woman, who had been known where she resided by the assumed name of Mrs. Foster, was really the wife of Morton, the English forger.

In my own mind I was satisfied that Morton had now added wife-murder to the long list of crimes which he had committed in the course of a career of infamy.

But the proof of this—how was I to obtain it?"

In a singular manner this was furnished, and the result proved that the forger's wife really possessed something of the astuteness with which she had been credited when she was the devoted accomplice of Morton.

That very evening, as Pollock and I sat in the office, two ladies made their appearance.

They were both pretty and young.

I started involuntarily as I beheld them, for both bore a very striking resemblance to George Morton's deceased wife.

The elder of the ladies began the conversation hastily, and both declined to accept the seat we tendered them. Then one of them said:

"My name is Kate Bell, and this lady is my sister. I am a married woman, and I reside ten miles from Boston, in a village. My husband is a traveling salesman, and absent from home at this time. Yesterday morning I received the following letter from my sister Jennie, who ran away from home five years ago, and of whom her family has not heard one word in all that time."

As she spoke she produced a letter, and handed it to me.

It read as follows:

"Boston, Mass., Nov. ——.

"DEAR KATE: I am residing at No. —— North C—— street, Boston, with my husband, and am known as Mrs. Foster. I hope to see you soon and explain my strange conduct of the past. I will see you, sister, if I live. Should anything happen to me, search my room, and in the chimney you will find a letter which will explain all.

"Your loving sister, JENNIE."

When I had read this letter I asked the two ladies a few questions, and learned that they had been informed of their sister's death through the newspapers, and they had come to ask the advice of a detective.

I also learned that they had no suspicion that their sister had been the wife of Morton.

The ladies desired to search the room which their sister had occupied, and Pollock and myself set out for the house on North C—— street, accompanied by the sisters.

When we reached the place we found that the coroner had locked the door of the room which Morton and his wife had occupied, and carried away the key; and further, that he had forbade the landlady allowing any one to open the door.

A little argument in the shape of a bank-note, however, proved sufficient to overcome the landlady's scruples about disobeying the coroner, and I entered the room where Mrs. Morton had met her death.

Immediately I removed the burnished metal cover that closed the aperture in the chimney, intended for the reception of the stove-pipe, and thrusting in my hand I drew out a letter.

I had produced my flashlight, and while one of the sisters held it and the other clung to my arm trembling with anxiety, I read the letter which I had taken ffom the chimney.

The substance of it was that Morton no longer loved his wife, that he had neglected her for another, and that she—Mrs. Morton—had determined to betray him, but that she feared Morton suspected her, and that he meant to take her life. "If I die suddenly George Morton is my murderer," the letter said.

In conclusion it stated: "George will leave for Hartford, Conn., to-morrow, and while there he will stop at the R—— House in disguise."

"Find Jennie's assassin and bring him to justice," implored the two sisters of the forger's wife.

I promised to do so, and two days later, in the city of Hartford, I ran the forger down and arrested him.

He finally confessed his wife's murder, saying he gave her the poison in a glass of wine, and placed the empty bottle by her side to give the idea that she had committed suicide.

Morton was electrocuted for the murder of his wife, and thus ends the career of one of the most remarkably cunning criminals I ever encountered

# Frog Hopkins, Ghost

BY EUGENE A. HANCOCK.

BEFORE the name Whisky Center became an anachronism and was abandoned, that wild derelict settlement lived up to its name and fame. It had been christened Whisky Center in fervent reaction against the effort of some misguided soul who strove to enskirt the place with the name of Harriet.

The name was appropriate enough, for the chief article of consumption in the village was whisky. In Whisky Center the six-shooter was the ordained apostle of the law of the survival of the fittest. Tobacco was the only tooth paste known, and a nightshirt was an anomaly.

There were a few shacks in the Center and the number of saloons could be approximately estimated by taking the number of shacks and multiplying by two. The joint run by Strangle Hold Larry was the most popular and the most precarious for both the peaceful and the warlike patrons.

Larry's was always ripe for anything from a man-mauling to a massacre, so the night that Frog Hopkins sauntered into the place, with his angling legs and his beady twinkling eyes and his frog-mouth mustache for the first time was no different potentially than any other night.

Frog's entrace, however, was an occasion, for his equal as an impersonator—unconsciously so, though it was—of the happy hoppy inhabitant of the marshes had never before been seen in Whisky Center, or for that matter in any of the realms to which Whisky Center inhabitants and habitues had ever traveled on the wings of the spirits frumenti.

He was the observed of all observers, the cynosure of all eyes—the focus of a score of near intellects.

Not far from the bar Lefty Gruber was engaged in the quiet pastime of staging a poker-chip round-up, and several other card wranglers, including Red Saunders, who had arrived in town but three days before, were contributing their unwilling assistance in herding the chips into Lefty's corral.

As Frog leaned against the bar about six feet away from Lefty, this gentleman swung half around in his chair, dropping his cards on the table, and his left hand fingered itself over the edge of the table, carelessly but significantly, and he stared like a steer at the ungainly Frog.

Frog glanced around, his face lighting a trifle as he encountered the gaze of Lefty, but he didn't stop his survey of the room until he had spotted Red. Red winked at him, and Frog stroked his frog-mouth mustache appreciatively. Frog's eyes swung back again to Lefty.

Whereupon Lefty started something. It was a habit he had.

"He looks good for a few rounds," Lefty sneered through curled lips; "line up to the trough, you fellers, and guzzle. He'll pay."

Lefty, however, made no effort to scramble to the brass rail with the Whisky Center hoi poloi.

"You said somethin' moment'us," Frog rumbled sarcastically.

With this Frog moved down the room, ignoring the gang at the bar, and as he passed Lefty he stumbled over his foot.

"Can't you steer them damn frog legs o' yourn any better'n that?" snarled Lefty.

Evidently the two men had faced each other before and were not now seeking to avoid further consideration of the subject of a previous conversation.

Lefty leaped from his chair, and as he did so Frog wheeled. Lefty's palm rested on the butt of his six-shooter, and almost at the same instant Frog's hand settled gently down upon his own side companion. Lefty began to reinitiate Larry's guests into the third degree of cussing. Frog was placid.

Frog's fingers gripped suddenly and there was a swift jerk upwards, but the revolver failed to come up in time, for Lefty was a split-second gun man, and he had never failed yet to beat the other man to the trigger.

Lefty smiled with grim humor as he realized that he had made a heart shot. Frog crumpled down in a pitiful heap, his angling legs spread out grotesquely, quivering for a second before they relaxed into utter quietness.

Lefty had always known that he had few friends in Whisky Center, but he had enjoyed the reign of terror he had been able to establish. Now as he glanced defiantly from face to face he saw something sinister in more than one pair of eyes. It was nothing new, but he seemed to see it differently. He was taken aback, and before he had regained his nonchalance a yellow streak in the man cropped out. With revolver muzzle lowered threateningly like the head of a bull, he backed out of the door and was gone.

A dozen burst out the door in time to see him swing into the saddle of Jim Paggan's pony and spur to a gallop. That act coupled with his shooting of Frog and the general dislike in which he was held was just enough to stir up the frontier crowd psychology to see a hanging as a logical thing and a thing to be desired for the general good of the community. He had committed murder, had turned coward and had stolen the pony of the man who was a prime favorite in Whisky

Center. Jim swore softly and fluently a few moments and the chase was on.

Strangle Hold Larry and Red Saunders, neither of whom joined the posse, carried Frog's body out into the back room, then went back to the bar and took a heavy drink apiece.

"I knowed Frog afore I come here, and he had a grudge agin' Lefty—an' it was fer good cause—an' Lefty's been layin' fer the chanct to get 'im. Frog ought to 'a' knowed Lefty wouldn't finger his trigger long. Well, pore Frog's dead and I s'pose it's up to me to undertake him to-morrer. Course the boys'll help, but Frog'd want me to take charge like, seein' as I knowed him."

Red, thus unburdered, took another drink from a bottle.

A funeral in Whisky Center was never an occasion for ceremony, and since Frog was a stranger and since many of the Whisky Center notables had not yet returned from their chase at sun-up the next morning, Red engineered a quiet early morning funeral with the assistance of only a few impromptu friends and neighbors, having attended to laying out the body during the night alone—and nailing down the lid of the box.

Whisky Center waited hour after hour for tidings of the man hunt, but none came until late afternoon. Lefty had managed to throw his pursuers off his trail shortly after he left the yellow lights of Whisky Center behind, but at dawn the trail was picked up again, and as luck would have it the chase was only a matter of a few hours. A half-dozen cowboys hell-bent for Whisky Center in the early morning had encountered Lefty and recognized Jim Paggan's pony. They questioned Lefty—since they knew Jim's steed was the apple of his eye—but got no satisfactory explanation, so took him in tow. They seemed to sense that something was wrong and that Lefty had lost his nerve. The posse, headed by Jim himself, met them half way.

Kid Bucklin, with a whoop and a swing of his Stetson, headed for Whisky Center on a gallop with the news. The arrival of Kid in Whisky Center was like the arrival of a nickel-in-the-slot machine. His dropping into the village with the news produced almost instantaneously a rope and a vigilante home guard to assist with the grim festivities that were to follow.

The rope prompted considerable spirited conversation. One youngster, whose desire to say something was altogether out of proportion to the importance of anything he could think of to say, remarked: "He'd ought to be strung up fer shootin' Frog Hopkins the way he did."

"Damn Frog Hopkins," drawled one of Jim Paggan's old cronies; "he ought to uv been lookin' out fer himself. But fer the coward to steal Jim's pony the way he did—hangin's too good fer 'im. He ought to uv stayed and argied it out if Frog's pal had any lead to throw away."

"Lefty's been too nervous about that gun o' his, and it'll be a blessin' to us peaceful and unfightin' citizens to stretch a little hemp on 'im," put in one of the more timid of the fast-gathering crowd.

"An eye fer an eye, and a rope fer a bullet——"

The conversation was chopped off unceremoniously by the arrival on the scene of Lefty and his escort. Jim and two or three others were left to watch him while the rest of the gang milled into Larry's for an appetizer.

After the proper amount of lickerin' up the meeting adjourned to assemble again immediately in the woods a short ways back of the saloon. Here Lefty was dragged stumbling over shadows, for it was growing dusk gradually and the shadows were long, and what strength there was left in him he seemed to be expending in a stuttery and eloquent spell of profanity. It was only the work of a few minutes to have the rope end dangling over a limb and the noose snuggling neatly under his chin, knot to his ear.

Some one suggested that Lefty might have something to say before his departure for parts unknown.

"Cut it short there, Lefty, time's nearly up," another piped up from the edge of the circle of spectators before he had fairly got his mouth open.

Lefty started a plea for mercy, but it degenerated into a whimper before he had half finished.

"Look at the skunk!" Jim Paggan exploded. "Let's swing 'im and be done with it. He don't seem to appreciate the honor of havin' us fellers put him where we can look up to 'im with more respect than we've ever could before. Swing on that rope there, you executioners."

And the executioners did pull—once—just hard enough to evoke from Lefty a gurgling groan. But the rope slackened and remained slack. A half-strangled masculine shriek had ripped open the awed stillness of the woods and struck the whole panorama of shadowy forms stone still. The horror had not come from Lefty's throat. Slowly, and as if stealthily, a hundred eyes probed fearsomely into the forest in the direction from which the sound seemed to have come.

Slowly a tall, misty gray figure took form in the shadows and came forward like a puff of smoke. Lefty saw the apparition as soon as any, and he trembled like a terror-stricken puppy.

"It's Frog!" he shrieked hoarsely, but his expression and his exclamation carried no news. All had recognized the angling legs and the frog-mouth expression of that strange mustache worn by the murdered man. The spectre came a trifle nearer. The crowd swayed backward silently, like the canvas of a tent bellying in the wind, but not an eye was taken off the frightful thing. The face of the ghost appeared pale and haggard, but there was not the shadow of a doubt but that it was the face of Frog Hopkins.

"Gee! but he's got the stubble singed off'n his

face," Jim ventured in an awed tone, affected but not silenced by the apparition. "His robes isn't white either; they must uv got all smoked where he's been. Hell and smoke! Pore Frog!"

After a silence the ghost's voice began to rumble huskily across the little forest arena and sneak about through the trees. The tones they recognized as Frog's, though they were permeated with a sepulchral unreality.

"Lefty," the words came, "I'll get you—I'm goin' to hant you till I get you—you'll be a gone carcass in a week—I'll get you—and you won't get hung to-night either—I'll sure get you this time. Sweet dreams, Lefty—full of snakes and Are—you'll see me again."

Then he dropped his long accusing arm with which he had transfixed Lefty while the words were being shot at him one at a time. Then the ghost turned impressively towards the crowd.

"Fellers, mortal men," the voice went on, "hangin's too good fer Lefty. Don't hang 'im—let me hant him to death. Good-by, and remember, I'll hant any one that teches 'im before I get done with 'im."

The apparition drifted behind a clump of bushes and was gone. Lefty collapsed, and the boys silently dragged him to his feet and led a hushed and subdued procession back to Larry's. Lefty was tumbled into the back room where Frog's corpse had lain the previous night. They were willing to give Frog's ghost a fair chance—or even better than a fair chance, for none wanted to risk incurring the ill will of a spook.

An hour later they were drinking as steadily as a modern sewer system when a curdled yell nearly tore a panel out of the door to Lefty's retreat.

Red Saunders, apparently braced up with a whisky valor, sneaked over to the door and applied his eye to a knot hole.

"Gawd! He's lookin' in at the winder."

There was a heart-smashing silence.

"Now he's gone ag'in," Red continued. "Lefty's done up; he can't even walk."

Red turned from the door and his eyes shot fear the length of the bar. There was a brief consultation. Red and Jim went into the back room and dragged Lefty out, and they poured a tumbler full of whisky down his throat. Then they dragged him back into his ghostly morgue and left him.

The next few days were hell in Whisky Center, with the devil's own unholy of unholies in the back of Larry's saloon. Lefty wouldn't go to his cabin and stay there alone for anything under the stars, and the boys couldn't resist his pleading to let him stay at the saloon with the crowd. They didn't want him with an avenging ghost on his trail in their midst exactly, so they compromised on throwing the paralyzed Lefty into Frog's ghost chamber.

During those days Frog's ghost was working three eight-hour shifts a day. He was invisible in daylight, it was true, but he seemed to find a way to reach poor Lefty. At night Frog was a horror. The whole place might just as well have had delirium tremens in concert. Before the week was out no man would have been able to tell whether Lefty was a driveling idiot or not. It would have been an act of mercy to have boiled him in oil, but all had too much respect for Frog's ghost to bring even a sixshooter into play.

One evening Lefty came staggering desperately out to the bar, clutching everything within reach to keep himself on his feet. He broke out with a fiendishly hoarse whisper.

"My gawd! Gi' me somethin' to drink. Another bottle, damn it, another bottle!"

And he stood there weaving back and forth, pouring the whisky down his throat until he had had enough to kill three men. He turned and pointed with a palsied finger towards Frog's ghost standing in the door. Lefty was a sliver in the wind.

He looked at the ghost a few seconds and laughed. There was no doubt about his being a lunatic now. He drew his revolver from his holster. For some reason he had been allowed to retain his gun—perhaps the crowd had anticipated that he might use it to put himself out of his misery and had sympathized with him to that extent.

"You can't get me now!" he shrieked. The muzzle of the six-shooter wavered upwards until it found his own temple, and there was a roaring explosion. Lefty fell back from the bar dead.

There was a moment when Lefty's body was the centre of interest, then a moment of strange bewilderment followed as Frog's ghostly presence failed to vanish. Instead, the ghost sauntered deliberately into the room and rested an elbow on the bar. A ghostly foot was lifted and felt for a resting-place on the brass rail.

"A little whisky, there, Larry, I'm gettin' mighty thirsty!"

Larry dropped a glass and his jaw fell almost to his chest. It was Frog's voice all right, and apparently resuming all its former substantiality.

There was a period of mystification, but Frog's ghosthood gradually fell away. He laughed. Red reached out and shook hands with the re-embodied Frog. The spell was broken. All that remained of the ghosthood was a little crude make-up and an old linen duster.

"I guess we'd better take your name off'n the board where that box of rocks is buried," Red remarked with a dry twinkle. "And say, it was like feedin' pie to a kid. Lefty was flattered when I fell in love with his gun and wanted to look at it, and slippin' in the blank cartridge wasn't no trick at all."

"Yes," grinned Frog. "That's as good as the trick I played on you when I came to, found myself only wounded, an' filled ther coffin with stones which you buried."

# After Many Years

By RICHARD HARRINGTON

TEN years ago Fordyce Manor in the Bronx was the home of Reginald Fordyce, an old 'bach.' of sixty, who had adopted the son of his deceased sister, Emma Mortland.

The boy was a handsome young fellow of twenty then, and just as smart and attractive a youngster as you'd wish to see.

Old Reginald was a peculiar man, and having lost money by the failure of a bank he had concluded to become his own banker, and therefore procured a heavy safe, warranted burglar-proof, and therein stored his ready money.

About six months after Dick Mortland—that was his nephew's name—became an inmate of his uncle's house, Peyton Fordyce, the son of old Reginald's brother, who had recently died a bankrupt in Calcutta, came, by his uncle's invitation, to make his home also at the Grange.

The young man from Calcutta, it was said, had the blood of an East Indian mother—a native Hindu—in his veins; but that did not seem to militate against him with his uncle, for he was the son of old Reginald's favorite brother.

Before Peyton arrived at Fordyce Manor it had come to the knowledge of his Uncle Reginald that Dick Mortland formed an attachment for the daughter of his head gardener, Mina Thursby by name, and as pretty a girl as you could find.

Reginald, who was as proud as Lucifer and boasted of his "blood," was by no means pleased with this.

Like the foolish old fellow in the play, he ranted and raved and swore that there should be no mesalliance in young Dick's case, and he informed that young gentleman in the most positive terms that he must drop Miss Thursby instanter or he should never inherit a dollar from him.

Previous to making the discovery of Dick's love affair, he had expressed his intention to divide his fortune equally between Peyton Fordyce and his sister's son.

The evening following that upon which he made known his ultimatum to Dick, and peremptorily forbade his meeting Mina again, the young man was alone with his uncle in the latter's study at a very late hour, and the servants, as they chanced to pass the door from time to time, heard old Reginald and Dick Mortland conversing in loud and seemingly angry tones.

Suddenly there was the sound of a pistol-shot, and when, a moment after, the servants rushed into the library, they saw old Tom Thursby lying upon the floor with a bullet in his head, while the window was open, and so was the safe in which Reginald kept his money.

The safe had been rifled of its contents, and neither Reginald nor Dick were in the room.

The servants raised the old gardener and he groaned out these words:

"The window was open. I came in to see the boss, when Dick Mortland—— Oh, my God! my head is on fire!"

He fainted before he could utter another word, and when he returned to consciousness he was stark mad. The bullet in his head had driven him crazy, so the medical men said afterward.

He raved incoherently, but from his rambling talk nothing more could be learned.

Finally he recovered his bodily health to a degree, but his mind was shattered, and he was sent to an insane asylum for treatment.

Peyton Fordyce was absent from the Manor that night, where, no one knew, though when he returned soon after the occurrence he stated that he had been to a village a few miles distant.

Under Peyton Fordyce's lead the grounds about the house were searched, and in a dark pool, at a considerable distance, the following day the body of Reginald Fordyce was found.

The old man had been stabbed to the heart.

Every one believed Dick Mortland had robbed and murdered his uncle—else why did he run away, for he had absconded; and although the country around was searched, no trace of him was found until next day, when he was discovered lying beside a hedge near a gypsy encampment four miles from the house.

Dick Mortland was dead drunk, his hands were stained with blood, and upon his person was found a large sum of money and documents known to be taken from the safe of his murdered uncle.

Not far from the spot where young Mortland was discovered, a dagger was found concealed under a log, which it was afterward proven was the weapon which had caused the death of Reginald Fordyce.

The evidence against Dick was overwhelming.

He was arrested, and when he became sober he stated that he drank a glass of wine early in the morning with Peyton Fordyce before the latter left the Manor, as he did shortly afterward, and that he had, after taking the wine, experienced strange and to him unaccountable sensations from the moment he swallowed it until when, in a heated argument with his uncle in the library, he became insensible just as the gardener entered the library through the window.

From that moment until he returned to reason in the jail, Dick declared that all was to him a complete blank. He did not know what had occurred.

This was the young man's defense, but it had no weight with judge or jury, and when he was convicted of his uncle's murder the only evidence

showing that a doubt of his guilt had entered the mind of the judge was in the fact that, instead of condemning him to death, he was sentenced to prison for life.

Dick was taken to Sing Sing, and although he persisted in declaring his entire innocence of his uncle's murder, there seemed little ground for believing that he spoke the truth.

After Reginald Fordyce's murder his will was read, and it was found that the deceased had divided his fortune equally between his two nephews, and as Dick was dead in law, Peyton Fordyce inherited all.

Three months after Dick was sentenced a young and beautiful girl, with the country bloom upon her cheeks, visited a New York detective's office.

She introduced herself in these words:

"I am Mina Thursby, and I have come to consult you in secret about the case of Dick Mortland. I desire to make a statement, which I have not made until now because I hoped that my father, whom I believe could explain the mystery of Reginald Fordyce's murder, might recover his mind, and thus save Richard, whom I know in my heart has been unjustly convicted of this terrible deed."

Bill Mason, the detective, was most favorably impressed with the clear-headed manner of the young lady, and was very much interested at once.

"Proceed, Miss Thursby. This interview shall be regarded as a strictly confidential one," said he.

His curiosity regarding the statement she was about to make was intense, for Peyton Fordyce was a friend of his, as we use the word friend—that is to say, Bill had met him in New York, and as he was a hail fellow well met a sort of passing friendship had sprung up between them.

"What I came to say is this," Miss Thursby went on. "From the first time I met Peyton Fordyce I disliked him, for I could see that there was an evil spirit under his pleasing manner; but he admired me, professed to love me, and asked me secretly to become his wife. I refused, of course, and foolishly, as I know now, I confessed to him that I was engaged to Richard.

"The very next day Reginald Fordyce informed Richard that he knew of his engagement to me, and I am sure Peyton told him. I am sure also that my rejection of him and the knowledge that I had accepted Richard made Peyton the enemy of Richard. I cannot prove anything, but I believe Peyton plotted his uncle's murder, and arranged to place the guilt upon Dick.

"The night before the murder I saw Peyton in earnest conversation with two of the gypsies who were encamped near the Manor, and I saw him give them money. It has occurred to me that if these wandering vagabonds could be found, they might be induced to reveal something to vindicate Dick."

Miss Thursby paused.

"With regard to your father, miss. Is his case considered hopeless? Will he not regain his reason? What is the opinion of the medical men who are treating him in the insane asylum?" asked Mason.

"They assure me his case is hopeless," she replied.

Then she went on to tell that her demented father was confined in a private asylum for the insane; that Peyton Fordyce had recommended the institution, and paid for the unfortunate's treatment there; that she had visited him, and that he seemed to have every care and kindly treatment.

The detective made a mental note of all his client had said, and particularly regarding the gypsy, and the fact that Peyton Fordyce had selected the asylum in which Mr. Thursby was confined, and that he paid his expenses there.

"What is your opinion, sir? May there not yet be hope? Is it not possible that we may yet prove that Richard was falsely accused, and unjustly convicted of a crime of which he was innocent? May we not hope one day to bring him back, cleared in the eyes of all the world of the guilt which a dreadful plot has placed upon him?" said Miss Thursby, with emotion which she could not restrain.

"I confess, Miss Thursby, that I do not feel justified at this time in arousing a hope for which as yet I can see no grounds. But I assure you that I will do all I can to serve you in this matter. I shall quietly investigate the points you have mentioned. The gypsies shall be found and I shall visit the institution in which your father is confined one of these days myself," said Mason.

Miss Thursby was profuse in her thanks. She placed her purse upon the office-table, saying:

"I am a poor girl, earning my own living as a sewing-girl, but I will give you all the money I have."

Bill put it back in her hands, and hurried her out of the office, saying that it was one of the laws of the detective profession never to accept a fee until it was earned.

Bill Mason put two of his men, Paxton and Green, on the trail of the gypsies, and made it a point to visit the asylum in which Mr. Thursby was confined.

What was his surprise, when he reached that institution, to hear that Thursby had escaped.

A diligent search was made for him, but he was not found.

Mason's men failed to find the parties they were after, and it came out at a future time that the gypsy band who had camped near Fordyce Manor at the time of Reginald Fordyce's murder had gone to Europe.

The years went by and Peyton Fordyce prospered, while nothing was heard from Mr. Thursby, but his daughter, the convict's betrothed, had accumulated a little start in life, and was the proprietress of a millinery establishment in a small way in New York.

Mina Thursby was faithful to her first love.

and still believed that Dick Mortland was innocent of his uncle's murder.

One night, nearly ten years after the date of the murder, and when the affair had passed from mind, a stalwart, bearded man entered Mason's office.

"You are Mr. Mason, the detective?" he said.

"I am, sir," Bill replied.

"My name is Richard Mortland," he said. "I am an escaped convict, but I have become a detective—a convict detective."

Bill had been studying his face, and now recognized him.

The stranger was certainly Dick Mortland, who had been sentenced for life for the murder of Reginald Fordyce.

"I have a strange story to tell, and I have come to you because Mina Thursby tells me you have been her true friend all these years of our separation. I have just come from Mina's home, and she is to-night the happiest woman in all New York, because she knows that I have the evidence to prove that I am an innocent man," said Mortland.

There was conviction in the man's voice, and Bill sprang to his feet and wrung his hand warmly.

"After many years I return to clear myself in the eyes of the world. Listen now, and I will tell you what I know," said Mortland.

"Six months ago I escaped and safely landed in Boston undetected.

"Upon the streets of Boston I met a demented man in the tattered garb of a sailor, and in him I recognized Mina's father, Mr. Thursby, the former gardener of Fordyce Manor.

"He did not know me, but I befriended him, and one day while we were at work on a scaffold he fell and struck upon his head, fracturing the exterior tables of the skull.

"In performing an operation which was necessary to save his life, the surgeon found a pistol bullet pressing down a piece of the interior of the skull bone upon the brain, and he removed it, thus taking the pressure from his brain, which had been constant while the pistol ball remained in his skull.

"When Thursby recovered his reason was fully restored.

"He recalled in a vague way his escape from a mad-house, and how he had been drugged and carried on board a vessel bound for Australia. He sailed to Sydney, but having discovered he was insane, the kidnappers cast him adrift, and he returned and had wandered on a harmless beggar since.

"But of all that occurred before he had received the shot which deprived him of his reason his memory was clear.

"He knows who killed my Uncle Reginald Fordyce, and he will make oath to the following statement:

"'A moment after he entered the library I fell senseless. At the same moment a man clad in gypsy garb, followed by Peyton Fordyce, came through the window.

"'They seemed surprised to find him there. The gypsy leaped at Thursby, while Peyton Fordyce plunged his knife into his uncle.

"'The gypsy clutched Thursby by the throat thus preventing his making any outcry; while they struggled, taking the key from his uncle, Peyton rifled the safe.

"'By this time Thursby was getting the advantage of the gypsy, and Peyton came close to him, and discharged the shot which wounded him in the head.

"'Thinking Thursby dead, the moment he fell Peyton, who was a herculean fellow, as was also his gypsy comrade, seized his uncle's body in his arms and dashed through the window, while the gypsy followed with me in his arms.'

"This Thursby saw before he became unconscious."

Mortland paused.

"After that we consulted for some time, and next day we proceeded to Fordyce Manor to arrest Peyton," he went on. "I had vowed to make the arrest in person. I wished to satisfy my vengeance by leading Peyton Fordyce to prison with my own hands. I hid myself in the woods, and approached the manor house, but had not proceeded far, when I encountered the new gardener's son with his dog.

"The boy demanded to know what I wanted; and I said:

"'Lead me to your employer.'

"'Here comes the boss and the judge now,' said the boy.

"A moment later Peyton Fordyce, still looking young and handsome in his spruce garb, approached with a legal-looking old gentleman, who walked with a cane.

"'This here stranger wants to see you,' said the boy, indicating me.

"Peyton Fordyce had not recognized me.

"Suddenly I wheeled upon Fordyce, and seized him by the throat.

"'I am Richard Mortland, the man whom you doomed to ten years of penal servitude, and I have returned to have my revenge!' I shrieked, and as I spoke I hurled Fordyce to the ground and handcuffed him."

Mason nodded and a few moments later Dick departed.

Mortland was pardoned, and his innocence proclaimed. During Fordyce's trial, a gypsy, sentenced for a murder committed in Wapping Falls, confessed that he had been Peyton's accomplice in the crime at Fordyce Manor.

He said that Fordyce had drugged Mortland's wine with an East Indian opiate, and had placed in his pocket the money and papers which were found there.

Mina Thursby and Mortland were married, and as he now inherits the Fordyce estate, their future should be a happy one.

# Was He The Assassin?

By GERTRUDE ST. ANDREWS

"IT was a remarkable experience that indirectly induced me to become a detective," said my friend Waters, one day recently, down at Lincoln, Illinois, where he was investigating the Zora Burns murder mystery. I had gone there out of morbid curiosity. Materials for detective stories are, in my case at least, largely drawn from actual experiences, or the narratives of my detective friends.

"I was not aware of the fact that any particular episode in your career had influenced your choice of a profession," I replied.

"But it did, though, and the incident to which I allude very nearly cost my life, too," answered Waters.

"What was the incident to which you refer?" I asked.

"Are you after the story," said Waters, with a smile.

"Certainly. In the words of another, 'I am on the job for that purpose,'" was my rejoinder.

"You authors are always on the lookout for sensations," Waters answered.

"It's our business. Now you mean to tell me the story, or you would not have hinted at it—so go ahead."

"Well, I will; and one thing I can assure you, and that is that the story is new. I have never given it to one of your fraternity before.

"At twenty-five years of age I was a poor clerk here in Chicago, trying to live on twelve dollars per week and keep up the appearance of a gentleman. Imagine twelve dollars a week in these post war times when office boys get more than that.

"My fellow clerks used to spend their little spare cash for 'a good time,' on Saturday nights, and they used to laugh at me because I would not join them, and spent my savings on clothes.

"I didn't get as much money as some of the young men in the establishment where I was employed, but I was the best dressed one among them; and, say what you will, appearances go a good way in this world.

"One night in the early fall I was standing in the lobby of the Grand Pacific Hotel, on Clark street, smoking a good cigar and togged out in my best.

"A lady walked by attired in the height of fashion. She possessed one of the prettiest faces imaginable, and a form that was the very ideal of feminine perfection. I looked at her; she looked at me. In fact, we both looked, and she paused, and said:

" 'Excuse me, sir, but will you kindly tell me where I can find a cab?' Taxis were unknown then.

" 'Certainly, miss,' I replied, touching my hat; I knew she was a miss. 'You will find a cab at the public stand opposite the post-office.'

" 'Is it far?'

" 'No, not far. But if you will permit me, I will accompany you to the cab-stand,' I said.

" 'Thank you, sir. I regret that I should trouble you, but I am a stranger, and I will gladly accept your escort,' replied the young lady, with a smile that completely fascinated me.

"The lady slipped a daintily-gloved hand within my arm, and we turned the corner below and crossed to Monroe street.

"Thence, conversing animatedly, we walked to Clark street, where my companion paused.

" 'Can I trust you, sir?' she asked, while her dark eyes searched my face.

" 'You can. I am only too anxious to serve you,' I replied reassuringly, for there was something in her manner that startled me, but I concealed the fact.

" 'Then accompany me, and this night's work shall be worth a fortune to you,' she said.

" 'Most willingly, miss,' I quickly replied.

" 'Call a cab. I will direct the driver,' said the lady.

"I obeyed and she whispered to the driver, then we entered his vehicle and were whirled rapidly away.

"The lady held my attention strongly somehow.

" 'I am in deadly peril,' she said. 'My life may depend upon you. I have chosen you to protect me. Promise you will do as I request, and tomorrow all shall be explained.'

"Of course I promised. My curiosity was aroused.

"After a short ride the carriage came to a halt, we alighted, and my companion unlocked the door of a gloomy house with a pass-key. We entered and my strange companion ignited the gas in the hall. This done, she ushered me into a handsomely-furnished room, in which stood a safe. From a sideboard she produced wine, and I pledged her health in a glass. After that all was a blank.

"I had been drugged. The wine rendered me insensible. It seemed that she could gain nothing by her treachery as I carried no money or jewelry.

"When I came to my senses again, the lady was gone and I was lying on the floor. I arose. The next moment I started back in horror.

"Upon the floor a few feet from me lay the body of a man. He was dead.

"There was a wound in his temple, and beside the dead man lay my pistol that I had in my hip-pocket when I entered that room.

"I picked up the weapon and found one chamber was empty.

"The weapon fell from my hand. I groped my

way to the door, and I passed through it to the hall. The street door yielded at my touch, and I passed out into the dark street.

"I reached my boarding-house and made my way to my room, where I fell upon my bed and sank into a profound sleep.

"I was late at my counter in the store where I worked in the morning, but I had scarcely taken my place behind it, when Benson, the old-time detective, rushed into the store, accompanied by a policeman.

"Down the store he made his way, closely followed by the officer, until he saw me.

" 'There is our man,' he said, pointing to me and the policeman seized me.

" 'I arrest you on the charge of murder!' he said.

"I almost tremble now as I recall that terrible moment. The next moment I was hurried from the store and my captors marched me to the very house where I had seen the murdered man the preceding night.

" 'This is a question of identification,' said Benson. 'If the young lady identifies this man, he is the assassin.'

"He rang the bell.

"A young and beautiful girl, whom I had never seen before in all my life, appeared.

" 'Is this the young man who called upon your father, and whom you admitted to his presence last night?" the detective asked the girl.

"After a close scrutiny she said, 'No; he is not the man!'

" 'Are you sure?' Benson asked.

" 'I am. The man whom I admitted to my father's presence, and who was the last person who saw him alive, was like this man in general appearance; but I can swear this man is not the one I admitted,' the lady said emphatically.

" 'Very well, miss, I have made a mistake,' said the detective, and the lady re-entered the house and closed the door.

" 'Young man,' said the detective, turning to me, 'I ask your pardon, but circumstances pointed you out. Come to my office, if you please, and it may be you can help me solve the mystery of a cruel murder.'

" 'Certainly, sir,' I replied and I accompanied Benson.

"When we reached his office, he said:

" 'Last night Mr. Andrews, the wealthy speculator, and his daughter returned to their house unexpectedly. The house had been closed during their absence from the city, and there was no one in it, as far as they knew.'

" 'Mr. Andrews entered the parlor, and shortly after a gentleman called, and was ushered into Mr. Andrews's presence by his daughter, whom you just saw at the door of his house.'

" 'A few moments later a pistol-shot was discharged in the parlor, and Miss Andrews was so terrified that she did not dare go into the room for some moments.'

" 'When, at last, she did enter the parlor, she found her father lying dead, and the man she had admitted was gone.'

" 'I was called, and from Miss Andrews' description of the mysterious guest, I fancied I recognized you; for, as you know, I have frequently seen you at the store where I trade. Moreover, I found a pistol beside the dead man, with your name on it, and a bullet from that weapon killed Mr. Andrews.'

"Hoping to aid the detective I carefully explained all that had happened to me on the previous night.

" 'From what Miss Andrews told me, I now believe that you may have been made the victim, to a certain extent, of a terrible plot. Now if you will tell me the whole truth, and aid me, so far as is in your power, to find the assassin of Mr. Andrews, I will stand by you and clear you from all shadow of suspicion.'

"I was only too glad to do this.

" 'You are indeed an innocent man,' he said. 'But if you had fallen into other hands the affair might have cost you your life. You should congratulate yourself on your escape. Now, promise you will keep all your experience of last night a secret, and you shall not be further annoyed. I will explain everything at your store so as to place you in a favorable light,' said Benson.

"I gave the required promise and Benson kept his word.

"Two weeks later the real murderer was arrested by the officer.

"Then he told me the secret history of the case.

"Mr. Andrews was a widower three years previous to his death, and had married a young woman, the one who accosted me in front of the Grand Pacific.

"This young woman and her brother, who looked very much like me, had induced Andrews to make a will, leaving the bulk of his fortune to his last wife.

"Then they had plotted to kill him.

"Knowing that Andrews was to return to his home on the night of the murder, and that his daughter had induced him to change the will in her favor, Mrs. Andrews and her brother, with whom she was visiting, returned to Chicago in advance of the doomed one.

"They had seen me in the store, noted my resemblance to the man in the case, and Mrs. Andrews had decoyed me to the house for the purpose of placing the crime on me.

"A confession of the whole affair was wrung from Mrs. Andrews, who was made to believe that her brother, who had shot Andrews with my pistol, had previously confessed.

"After this of course I was well acquainted with Mr. Benson, the detective, and he offered to employ me at a better salary than I was receiving, and I accepted his offer.

"In time I became celebrated; and taking everything into consideration, perhaps, after all, it was for the best that I met with the thrilling experience I have told you about."

# The Black Satchel

By CHARLES MONTAGUE

THE news was in everybody's mouth. It flew fast, as bad news always does. Mercantile Pharisees, in all their pride of solvency, stood at the street corners and thanked Heaven that they were not as he.

"We told you so," prophesied the retrospective prophets.

"An awful smash!" croaked the croakers; "not fifty cents on the dollar."

"Pride must have a fall," moralized the moralizers. "Giles Gregory held his head altogether too high!"

"I'll have the rascal arrested!" cried Eben Nabcoin, the money-lender.

"What a pity for Mr. Smugg," everybody said. "He's such a nice young man, and now he's thrown out of employment."

Mr. Smugg, in whom so much sympathy centered, was Mr. Gregory's head clerk and business manager. He had given his employer timely warning—so he now hinted confidentially—of the impending peril; but heedless Mr. Gregory had refused to take in sail, and in consequence was dashed upon the rocks of business failure.

The merchant's protest that the blow had fallen unforeseen of course passed for nothing with the keen Mr. Nabcoin. That Mr. Gregory had gotten him to discount a bill the very day before his failure, to the distrustful mind of Eben, was conclusive proof of fraud, and as soon as Fleecem Bros., his attorneys, could prepare the requisite papers, he had the delinquent debtor arrested and sent to jail.

Leaving him there for the present, and his motherless daughter, Alice, to grieve over his misfortune, let us follow Ernest Gray, a young detective who had long loved Alice as well—well, as well as she had loved him.

Alice's father disapproved the young man's suit. He had higher aims for his daughter than a match with one whose position was now hunting, and Ernest Gray was too proud to press his claims when pelf might be thought to be his motive. He had gone to work in a distant city, where he met Smugg carrying a black satchel. Wondering where he was going, Ernest shadowed him aboard an outward-bound ship. Seeing he was under suspicion, Smugg found a chance to lock Ernest in the hold, whence he did not escape until the vessel was far out at sea. The detective did not see who locked him in, but suspected Smugg and accused him, but the man denied it.

In mid-ocean a German submarine torpedoed the ship.

Passengers and crew took turns at the pumps with the energy of men struggling for life, but still the water gained as the submarine advanced.

"Lower the boats!" shouted the captain, when at last it became apparent that the only choice lay between the slender hope thus afforded and going down with the sinking ship.

The command was obeyed, and none too soon, for the last of the frail craft barely escaped being drawn into the vortex caused by the doomed vessel as she disappeared beneath the surging billows.

Ernest Gray found himself in the smallest boat, with two companions—one of them Caleb Smugg, who, too, had chanced to be a passenger on the torpedoed ship. He alone had thought of saving his effects. He held a black leather satchel in his hand, to which he hung tenaciously through the whole exciting turmoil.

There had been no time to secure water or provisions. The only chance of life lay in the boats and rescue by some passing vessel before death came through starvation. When morning came Ernest and his companions looked in vain for the other boats. They had either been lost or borne out of sight.

Days and nights passed, but no help came. Ernest Gray and Caleb Smugg were now alone in the boat. Hunger had done its work on the third man, and Caleb Smugg was fast succumbing to it. He gazed at Ernest with the glare of a famishing wolf and seemed ready to spring at his throat. But Ernest was the stronger of the two, and kept his eye steadily on that of the starving wretch, who quailed under his look like a subdued animal. He sank back in the boat, and the pallor of death began to settle on his face.

"I have something to tell you before I die," he gasped.

Ernest leaned over him, for his words were scarcely audible.

The dying man continued in murmuring tones, growing feebler and feebler, the listener bending his ear closer and closer, as if fearing to lose a syllable. It was not alone the horror of being face to face with death that made Ernest start up as the poor wretch breathed his last. Intense astonishment was pictured on his face.

A sail hove in sight at that moment. Ernest signaled it and was seen and rescued.

The beauty of Alice Gregory had more than once caused a flutter in the little heart that Eben Nabcoin had. He ventured to tell her so on one occasion, but the avowal was met with scorn. Maybe it was because he felt the flutter still; maybe it was for vengeance sake. At any rate

Eben came one day to see the afflicted daughter of him whom he had cast into prison.

"It is in your power to set your father free," he said.

A gleam of joy for an instant lit up the girl's wan features. Then a half-terrified expression succeeded.

"How—how may I do it?" she faltered.

"By becoming my wife," was the cold, relentless answer.

The slight, drooping form became at once proudly erect. The bright eyes of Alice flashed forth unutterable contempt.

"My father would scorn to accept his liberty at such a price," she said, "even if I were base enough to offer it."

A spectator came upon the scene unobserved. As Alice turned her back upon the man she loathed her eyes fell upon Ernest Gray.

"Oh, Ernest, Ernest, I'm so glad you have come!" she exclaimed. "This man has not only thrown my father into prison, but now adds the insult of asking me to be his——"

She could not speak the word.

"That, I presume, is the price asked for your father's liberty?" said Ernest.

"I have so put it," spoke up Eben, with easy assurance.

"Maybe there is another price you would accept," replied Ernest, with equal coolness.

"I have named the only one."

"Not the money due you?" Ernest asked, impatiently.

"Oh, if you are able to pay that," said Eben, with a sarcastic grin.

"Mr. Gregory is," Ernest interrupted. In a few words he told the story of his shipwreck, concluding thus:

"With his dying breath Caleb Smugg confessed that he had plundered his employer for years, and that it was the sums thus abstracted, which he had artfully concealed by false bookkeeping, and not any real losses, which caused Mr. Gregory's failure. The fruit of his dishonesty Caleb, who was a very prudent man, carefully hoarded; and in this satchel which he gave me will be found every cent of the stolen money. It belongs to Mr. Gregory, and is more than enough to pay all he owes and set him going again."

So Mr. Nabcoin got his money, Giles Gregory his liberty, and Ernest Gray is now the latter's son-in-law and junior partner.

## BAALBEK THE MYSTERIOUS

THE Great Temple of Baalbek lies 44½ feet above the level of the plain and is the highest part of the entire inclosure, while the Great Court was only 23 feet lower down. An inclosing wall, the mammoth stones of which have been the marvel of engineers for ages, deserves mention. The lower courses of the wall here are built of stone of moderate dimensions, but they grow rapidly in size, until we come to a row of three enormous stones, the shortest being 63 feet and the longest 65 feet in length, each being about 13 feet high and 10 feet thick. The course of which they form part is some 20 feet above the surface of the ground. They are the largest building blocks ever known to have been used by man, and a still larger one lies in the ancient near-by quarry, never having been detached from the rock beneath. This one is 70 feet long, 14 feet high, and 13 feet wide. Its estimated weight is 1,100 tons, and it is calculated that to raise it would require the strength of 60,000 men. It was probably intended to be placed in the cyclopean wall of the temple inclosure, but some sudden war, pestilence, or revolution must have interrupted the plans of these ancient builders or they would not have expended the labor of years upon this mighty block and then abandoned it still unattached from the quarry.

## $4,000 SILVER LOOT DUG UP FROM CAVE

"GO to ——'s cottage, midway between Jamaica and Flushing. Walk 400 feet straight from the rear of the house. Then dig."

These instructions were received from an anonymous source in a mysterious manner by Detectives Eugene Fallon and James Kierman of the Flushing police the other day.

The police officers were perplexed when they received the note, but they set out to follow the directions. After diligent effort they located the house. No one responded to their knocks.

They measured off the 400 feet from the rear of the house. At first nothing met their eye.

"I guess it's a joke," one decided, but the other noticed a section of earth which appeared to have been recently dug up. The detectives got down on their knees and commenced to burrow with their hands. After several minutes they uncovered a wooden door, which they lifted. It proved to be the roof of a neatly constructed cave, six feet deep.

Fallon jumped into the hole, and under another pile of earth uncovered an overcoat. He picked it up, and out came a great pile of silverware.

The detectives lugged their find back to the Flushing police station. There the coat and the silverware were identified as part of the loot taken from the residence of Craig Colgate, a banker, whose home at No. 11 Franklin Place, Flushing, was robbed some time ago. The property was valued at $4,000.

# Current News

## SMALL GIRL BABY.

Perfectly formed, but weighing only twenty-two ounces, a baby girl, so tiny that it could be cuddled, blankets and all, in the nurse's two hands, was born in Omaha, Neb., to Mr. and Mrs. Michael A. Regan. The physician in charge says that it has a chance to live.

## SWALLOWED WRIST WATCH.

Sadie Noel, sixteen-year-old school-girl of Crooksville, O., placed her wrist watch in her mouth the other night when she started to help her mother wash dishes. She coughed and the watch went down her throat.

Physicians ordered her brought to a Zanesville hospital, where an operation was performed after X-ray photographs revealed the timepiece lodged in her stomach. The watch, which was still running when recovered, is about the size of a quarter.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF COLORS ON PRISONERS.

The officials of a penitentiary are trying a new experiment by repainting the four cell-blocks and allowing each prisoner to select the color he likes for his own cell for the psychological effect it has upon the malefactor. The corridors of the cell-houses are being painted a light brown. The cells are being painted in attractive tints of yellow, blue, brown, buff, etc. None of the cells, the warden explained, is to have somber settings, but are all to be bright and cheerful. The penologist is always an optimist.

## BABIES PLAY WITH SNAKE.

Hearing her one-year-old twins, Harold and Howard, laughing and lisping the other afternoon, Mrs. Robert Shaal, of Wennwood, a suburb of Altoona, Pa., peeped into the kitchen to see what they were doing. She was horrified to find them playing with a three-foot blacksnake. The reptile crawled over and about the little ones, and the twins grabbed at its head and tail, but it would wriggle away. The snake and the babies seemed to be having the time of their lives. Mrs. Shaal, when she recovered her voice, screamed for help, and a neighbor rushed in and dispatched the snake.

## FIRST RAILROAD OUT OF CHICAGO.

The first railroad to get charter out of Chicago was the Galena & Chicago Union. It was chartered on Jan. 16, 1836, and work on it was at once begun. The object of this road was to increase the value of real estate at both points, Galena, being then a leading village of the West, obtained precedence in the naming of the road. Just two days after the incorporation of the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad the Illinois Central Railroad was incorporated. The 58 incorporators failed to do anything, and the project collapsed. It was revived by its immense land grant in September, 1850. The Galena & Chicago Union Railroad was revived in 1846, and by Nov. 21, 1848, the engine was running on the ten miles of completed road west of Chicago, conveying materials and laborers to carry on the work. On Nov. 20, 1848, Chicago received its first wheat transported by rail. In December, 1850, the Galena & Chicago Union was completed to Elgin, Ill., 42 miles, and was the first railroad out of Chicago. By Sept. 4, 1853, this road was 121 miles long.

## IMMORTALS IN TREE HALL OF FAME.

The American Forestry Association announces a list of trees that have been placed in its hall of fame for trees with a history. The idea is to preserve famous historical trees and to mark the dates that had a great influence on American history, such as the arrival of John and Charles Wesley in America. The tree under which Wesley preached is an oak tree still standing on St. Simon's Island. The Webster tree is the tree on which the great orator hung his scythe, when he finally decided to go to Dartmouth College. To mark the 115th anniversary of the pathfinding expedition of Lewis and Clark, a tree has been selected where they held one of their first councils with the Indians after leaving St. Louis. The tree was 150 years old at least before Lewis and Clark camped below it. Nominations to the hall of fame are made by various associations all over the country.

## SAYS HUSBAND SOLD HER

Mrs. Cora Marie Johnson would like to be out of the lock-up at the Harrison Street Police Station, Chicago. She hopes that Berger Peterson, a butcher, of Rockford, Ill., will get a writ of habeas corpus for her. Possibly a writ of replevin would be the proper paper, for Mrs. Johnson considers herself as a "chattel" as the result of a "marital deal."

Enoch Johnson, husband of the nineteen-year-old girl, sold her to Berger Peterson for a vacant lot in Rockford, valued at $500, she said, after Enoch, Berger and the latter's brother, Gus, had been arrested when the former sought to take his wife from a rooming house. All are held pending an investigation of the "sale."

Mrs. Johnson declared the transfer was made by a written agreement sworn to by a notary, stipulating that her husband relinquished all rights in consideration of the real estate.

## ASTRAL VAMPS PROWL.

Mrs. Sophia Fairclough-Smith, an English psychic, holds out eternal trouble for man in the astral world. The astral world, Mrs. Fairclough-Smith stated, is not all heavenly. There are evil spirits as well. In fact, it is pretty well filled with vampires, who are constantly pulling downward, and thus the uninitiated is not only in danger of the living vampires, but the dead ones as well, who fall upon him in an evil moment.

The evil aurora that emanates from Egyptian mummies in the art institute offended her occult sense recently, and, reaching the seclusion of her suite, she announced that it would be impossible for her to deliver her lecture in a place where the spirit rays are brown. These brown spirit rays are evil, she explained, and in the case of the mummies are the curse the ancient Egyptian placed upon all who should touch his body after death.

## EARLY USE OF METALS.

Prof. W. Gowland, in his Huxley memorial lecture at the Royal Anthropological Institute, London, recently spoke on the metals in antiquity and traced the origin of the smelting furnace to the primitive campfire in which a lump of ore might have been reduced to metal. But until the art of smelting had been invented the use of metals was insufficient to affect to any great extent the old stone agriculture. Prof. Gowland traced the earliest metallurgy of copper and iron to western Asia, but said the extraction of gold from its ores on a large scale in the earliest times was attributed to the Sudan. Egypt produced the first mining map in the world—a map showing a gold-mining region in 1350 to 1330 B. C. Lead only became of importance during the supremacy of the Romans in connection with their elaborate systems for the supply and distribution of water and the construction of baths. In Africa the extraction of iron from its ores was carried on at a remote date. The fact that this early African iron smelting was known in Egypt was well shown by the bas-relief on a stone now in the Egyptian collection in Florence.

## CONFESSED IN A TRANCE.

How a mental expert by hypnotizing a murderer obtained from him the full story of his crime was described at Manchester Assizes when Fred Quarmby, 47, of independent means, was sentenced to death for the murder of Mrs. Christine Ann Alexandra Smith at Blackpool on December 3.

For the defence Dr. Sydney Wilkinson, specialist in brain diseases, of Liverpool, said during one of his examinations he placed Quarmby in a hypnotic trance and obtained a full story of the crime from him in both the conscious and subconscious states, and the stories did not vary.

Quarmby explained that when Mrs. Smith turned off the light in the sitting room in which they were together "something seemed to possess him."

Dr. Wilkinson thought that some "chance association of ideas in accused's conscious mind let loose the impulses which had been stored in his subconcious mind for some weeks." Quarmby told him that "everything seemed in a dream," and he was swayed by an impulse to do this thing. Quarmby, he thought, acted in a state of blind frenzy. The blows were such as would be inflicted by a maniac.

Cross-examined, Dr. Wilkinson admitted he had not obtained from the authorities specific permission to hypnotize Quarmby, but he got permission to conduct the examination in his own way. Medical witnesses who had examined Quarmby in jail said there was no sign of insanity.

Mr. Justice Acton, summing up, said it might be the jury would think the evidence of hypnotism would not greatly affect the case because there was nothing to show that the results obtained under hypnotism were in any material sense different from those obtainable without hypnotism.

## LITERARY IMPOSTORS.

Clever literary impostors who have deceived the world are numerous. Gamelli Carrieri, a Neapolitan gentleman and scholar, while confined to his room for a long period of years by illness, amused himself by writing an account of an imaginary voyage around the world. When the volume was published it was taken as a fact, even by learned people. The detailed account of a trip to China which is credited to Du Halde is another literary hoax. The author had never seen China, and had been sufficiently clever to compile the work solely from the memoirs of Chinese missionaries. It is remarkable, though no less a fact, that "Gulliver's Travels" was thought to be a true narrative when it first appeared, and the famous story of Damberger's travels was likewise a hoax. Varillas, the French historian, enjoyed a wide reputation as a chronicler of events, but later it was discovered that his works were purely fakes. The volumes of this writer resemble those of Gregorio Reti, who, in order to keep himself from starving, appended the most unheard of incidents to English history as it was known. One of the most daring impostures on record is that of Joseph Vella, of Sicily. He said that he discovered seventeen of the lost books of Livy in Arabic. He then set to work and wrote a translation from his fancy, which was printed. After his death the fraud was discovered. Before his death, however, he fell under suspicion, and was condemned to imprisonment. There are countless cases of authors selling their names to be put on works they have never read. Sir John Hill once contracted to translate a Dutch book. After the agreement he remembered that he did not know a word of Dutch. He then bargained with another translator to do the work for half the price he was to receive.

### CRUCIFIED IN GOOD FRIDAY RITES.

Two men were crucified at the penitente Village of Abiqui in Northern New Mexico on Good Friday in observance of Holy Week in rites performed by members of the Hermanos de Luz, Brothers of Light, a religious order, according to B. J. Norfeldt and Gustave Baumann, artists of Santa Fe, N. M., who arrived here the other day.

Norfeldt and Baumann say they were members of a party of two dozen tourists who witnessed the crucifixion and the flagellation ceremonies connected with it.

For more than a half hour, the artists say, the two human sacrifices were tied to huge wooden crosses, at the end of which time they were taken down, exhausted. Their condition is said to be serious and recovery in doubt. The Penitentes, as the Hermanos de Luz are commonly known, are Indians with a Mexican admixture.

"The Penitentes formed in a long procession," said Mr. Nordfeldt, "and marching to slow, weird music, beat themselves with thorn whips soaked in brine water to wound themselves and make their wounds smart. One man carried a large wooden cross under the weight of which he fell exhausted frequently. The procession ended with the erection of two crosses with members of the order tied to them."

It is considered an honor among the Penitentes to be selected for crucifixion.

---

### CARVING OF CHRIST'S HEAD ON BEAN.

A carving of the head of Christ which has become something of a relic and has won equally the devotional admiration of prelates and the high approval of artists, was shown recently in the residence of Mrs. Oliver Harriman, No. 142 East 55th street. It is in the custody of Mrs. Harriman and Mrs. H. Willis McFadden.

The head is carved in relief on the concave pod of a Florida bean, with half the outer shell of the bean making a frame for it. Frame and setting are about the size of a silver dollar. One must use a microscope to perceive the delicacy of the carving, which brings out the features with tender detail, with tears coursing down the cheeks. Long exposure has hardened the pod until it is now like yellowed ivory.

The story its custodians have heard of it is that it was made in 1895 by a man awaiting death in a Guatemala prison. On the way to execution he passed a small package to his jailer to be given to the family of the condemned with the words: "This is my last message."

It remained a souvenir in the family several years and it was then accepted in discharge of a debt by a man who held a lien on the family home. This new owner kept it for fifteen years, admiring it, but with no thought of its art value, and then he gave it to a Senor Navia, the son of a boyhood companion. After holding it for four years in Madrid, Senor Navia came to New York, where he became enamored of Miss Sonia Nordstrom. Upon their betrothal several years ago he presented the carving to her. Since then she has had financial difficulties.

When it was first entrusted to Mrs. McFadden she showed it to the late Bishop Burch, who assured her it was the most satisfying portrayal of Christ's face he had ever seen. He christened it "Christus de Profundis."

Mrs. McFadden says that at the instance of Bishop M. J. Curley of the diocese of Florida, she took it to Cardinal Gibbons, who blessed it, kissed it three times and said: "You have a treasure. I have never seen anything so exquisite."

Frederick Macmonnies, the sculptor, said of it: "The little head is godlike and infinitely appealing and tender in its agony. The master sculptor who made it must have come through a life so drenched in sorrow that he was able to carve into that stricken face the soul of suffering."

When other prelates and artists added their praise, Mrs. McFadden brought the carving to the attention of Mrs. Harriman, who was deeply impressed with it and arranged the private view that was held at her home. It is the purpose of the custodians to try to make searching inquiries concerning the Guatemalan prisoner, in order to bring him posthumous credit for mastery in pictorial sculpture.

---

Statement of the ownership, management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of "MYSTERY MAGAZINE," published semi-monthly at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1921. State of New York, County of New York:—Before me, a Commissioner of Deeds in and for the city and county aforesaid, personally appeared Luis Senarens, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the "MYSTERY MAGAZINE," and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication, for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are: Publisher—Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Editor—Luis Senarens, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor—None; Business Manager—Luis Senarens, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Harry E. Wolff, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; N. Hastings Wolff, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and condition under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona-fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association or corporation has any interest, direct or indirect, in the said stock, bonds or other securities than as so stated by him.

LUIS SENARENS, Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29th day of March, 1921.—Benjamin Schenker. (My Commission expires March 1, 1922.)

## TAKE NOTICE!

**The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. Here are the latest numbers:**

NO.

31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box,' by Alexander Douglas.

36 "Trailed by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robert W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.

41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Charles F. Oursler.

44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.

50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by Beulah Poynter.

56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William Hamilton Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by Caroline Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.

61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by Chas. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.

65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue in the Dark Room," by Hamilton Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by Ethel Rosemon.

69 "The Spirit Bell," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow.
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thos. J. Lally.

73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Andreen.
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
75 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. F. Oursler.
77 "The Little White Room," by Marc Edmund Jones.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by William Kofoed.

80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.

**If you cannot procure any of the numbers you want from your newsdealer, send us the price, ten cents, in money or postage stamp, and we will mail them to you postage free. Address**

**FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,**
**168 West 23d Street, New York.**

## SCENARIOS HOW TO WRITE THEM

**Price 35 Cents Per Copy**

This book contains all the most recent changes in the method of construction and submission of scenarios. Sixty Lessons, covering every phase of scenario writing. For sale by all Newsdealers and Bookstores. If you cannot procure a copy, send us the price, 35 cents, in money or postage stamps, and we will mail you one, postage free. Address

**L. BENARENS, 210 Seventh Ave., New York, N. Y.**

## OUR TEN-CENT HAND BOOKS

**Useful, Instructive, and Amusing. They Contain Valuable Information on Almost Every Subject**

**No. 1. NAPOLEON'S ORACULUM AND DREAM BOOK.**—Containing the great oracle of human destiny; also the true meaning of almost any kind of dreams, together with charms, ceremonies, and curious games of cards.

**No. 2. HOW TO DO TRICKS.**—The great book of magic and card tricks, containing full instruction on all the leading card tricks of the day, also the most popular magical illusions as performed by our leading magicians; every boy should obtain a copy of this book.

**No. 3. HOW TO FLIRT.**—The arts and wiles of flirtation are fully explained by this little book. Besides the various methods of handkerchief, fan, glove, parasol, window and hat flirtation, it contains a full list of the language and sentiment of flowers.

**No. 4. HOW TO DANCE** is the title of this little book. It contains full instructions in the art of dancing, etiquette in the ballroom and at parties, how to dress, and full directions for calling off in all popular square dances.

**No. 5. HOW TO MAKE LOVE.**—A complete guide to love, courtship and marriage, giving sensible advice, rules and etiquette to be observed, with many curious and interesting things not generally known.

**No. 6. HOW TO BECOME AN ATHLETE.**—Giving full instructions for the use of dumbbells, Indian clubs, parallel bars, horizontal bars and various other methods of developing a good, healthy muscle; containing over sixty illustrations.

**No. 7. HOW TO KEEP BIRDS.**—Handsomely illustrated and containing full instructions for the management and training of the canary, mockingbird, bobolink, blackbird, paroquet, parrot, etc.

**No. 9. HOW TO BECOME A VENTRILOQUIST.**—By Harry Kennedy. Every intelligent boy reading this book of instructions can master the art, and create any amount of fun for himself and friends. It is the greatest book ever published.

**No. 10. HOW TO BOX.**—The art of self-defense made easy. Containing over thirty illustrations of guards, blows, and the different positions of a good boxer. Every boy should obtain one of these useful and instructive books, as it will teach you how to box without an instructor.

**No. 11. HOW TO WRITE LOVE-LETTERS.**—A most complete little book, containing full directions for writing love-letters, and when to use them, giving specimen letters for young and old.

**No. 12. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS TO LADIES.**—Giving complete instruction for writing letters to ladies on all subjects; also letters of introduction, notes and requests.

**No. 13. HOW TO DO IT; OR, BOOK OF ETIQUETTE.**—It is a great life secret, and one that every young man desires to know all about. There's happiness in it.

**No. 14. HOW TO MAKE CANDY.**—A complete handbook for making all kinds of candy, ice-cream, syrups, essences, etc., etc.

**No. 17. HOW TO DO MECHANICAL TRICKS.**—Containing complete instructions for performing over sixty mechanical tricks. Fully illustrated.

**No. 18. HOW TO BECOME BEAUTIFUL.**—One of the brightest and most valuable little books ever given to the world. Everybody wishes to know how to become beautiful, both male and female. The secret is simple, and almost costless.

**No. 20. HOW TO ENTERTAIN AN EVENING PARTY.**—A complete compendium of games, sports, card diversions, comic recitations, etc., suitable for parlor or drawing-room entertainment. It contains more for the money than any book published.

**No. 21. HOW TO HUNT AND FISH.**—The most complete hunting and fishing guide ever published. It contains full instructions about guns, hunting dogs, traps, trapping and fishing, together with description of game and fish.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 10c. per copy, in money or stamps, by

**FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,**
**168 West 23d Street, New York.**

**OH BOYS-GIRLS GREAT SPORT**

**THROW YOUR VOICE**

with CLAXOPHONE

under the table, back of a door, into a trunk, desk in School, any old place. Big FUN fooling Peddlers, Policeman, Friends. Claxophone lays on your tongue unseen, always ready to use by anyone. Imt. Birds, &c. Claxophone with full instructions a set of Secret Writing Tricks, also Magic Dial Trick, all for 10c., 3 for 25c. (no stamps).

**10c**

CLAXO TRICK CO., Dept. S New Haven, Conn.

**MYSTERIES OF MAGIC**

EXPOSES RARE SECRETS AND TRICKS

1 book, on Magic & Sleight-of-Hand; 1 book, on Mind Reading, long & short distance; 1 book, on Hypnotism and Palmistry; 1 book, Fire Eating Tricks exposed; 1 book, Vaudeville Acts; 1 book, Fortune Telling; 1 book, Interpreting Dreams; 1 Joke Book; 1 book, on Ventriloquism; 1 book, Tricks with Cards; 2 books, How to make Real Candies; 50 Real Money Making processes; Magic Age Table; Wonderful Memory trick, etc. all for

**10c** (coin) & 2c postage.

CLAXO TRICK CO., Dept. S 2 New Haven, Conn.

**Prosperity, Happiness Through Marriage.** Hundreds wealthy, worth to $65,000. Most successful; quickest results. Reliable, confidential. Descriptions FREE.
Mrs. Budd, Box 753, San Francisco, Calif.

**FRECKLES**

**Now Is the Time to Get Rid of These Ugly Spots**

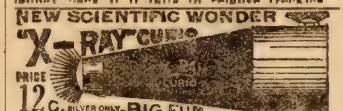
There's no longer the slightest need of feeling ashamed of your freckles, as Othine—double strength—is guaranteed to remove these homely spots.

Simply get an ounce of Othine—double strength—from your druggist, and apply a little of it night and morning and you should soon see that even the worst freckles have begun to disappear, while the lighter ones have vanished entirely. It is seldom that more than one ounce is needed to completely clear the skin and gain a beautiful clear complexion.

Be sure to ask for the double strength Othine as this is sold under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove freckles.

**NEW SCIENTIFIC WONDER**

**"X-RAY" CURIO**



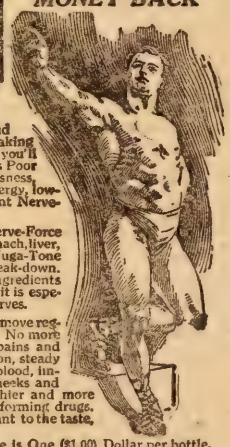
PRICE 12c. SILVER ONLY

**BIG FUN BOYS** You Apparently see thru Clothes, Wood, Stone, any object. See Bones in Flesh. A magic trick novelty FREE with each X Ray.

HARVEL MFG. CO., Dept. 13. NEW HAVEN, CONN.

**Nuga-Tone**

*RESULTS IN 20 DAYS OR YOUR MONEY BACK*



**BUILDS RICH, RED BLOOD, STRONG, STEADY NERVES, VIGOROUS MEN AND WOMEN**

When you are broken in Health and Strength, when your Mind gets dull and your Body weakens, when you are sick and tired of taking stimulants and narcotics, then try Nuga-Tone and see how quickly you'll feel like a new man! Nine-tenths of all human ailments, such as Poor Appetite, Indigestion, Gases and Bloating, Constipation, Biliousness, Anemia, Rheumatic twinges, Headaches, Neuralgia, lack of Energy, lowered Vitality, Nervousness and Sleeplessness, are due to deficient Nerve-Force, thin watery Blood and poor Blood Circulation.

Every organ, every function of the body is dependent upon Nerve-Force for its life and action. Nerve-Force is the main spring of the stomach, liver, kidneys and bowels, the heart's throb, the blood circulation. Nuga-Tone is the most sensible treatment for nervous and physical break-down. Why? Because it is composed of eight valuable health-giving ingredients recommended and prescribed by the foremost physicians and it is especially rich in Iron and Phosphorous—food for the Blood and Nerves.

Nuga-Tone puts life in the liver, invigorates the bowels so they move regularly. It revives the kidneys, drives out the poisonous wastes. No more gases and bloating, foul breath or coated tongue! No more pains and aches! Nuga-Tone gives you a wonderful appetite, good digestion, steady nerves and sound refreshing sleep. Nuga-Tone enriches the blood, improves the blood circulation, puts the glow of health in the cheeks and brightness in the eyes! It builds strong, rugged men, healthier and more beautiful women. Nuga-Tone contains no opiates—no habit forming drugs. It is put up in a convenient package. It is sugar coated, pleasant to the taste, easy to take. Try it. You'll recommend it to all your friends.

OUR ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE: The Price of Nuga-Tone is One ($1.00) Dollar per bottle. Each bottle contains Ninety (90) Tablets, one full month's treatment. You can buy six bottles, six months treatment, for Five ($5.00) Dollars. Take Nuga-Tone twenty (20) days; if you are not satisfied with results, return the remainder of the package, together with the box to us and we will immediately return your money. You see you can't lose a penny. We take the risk. Sold by all good druggists on same terms and guarantee. Don't wait until next week or next month, get it today.

**USE THIS COUPON WHEN ORDERING BY MAIL.**

National Laboratory, Dept. No 517 537 South Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:—Enclosed please find.....for which send me.....bottles of Nuga-Tone.

*Name*.....

*Street and No. or R. F. D.*.....

*City*.....*State*.....


## ELECTRIC SHIP MAKES 5,122 MILES WITHOUT STOP

The first leg of the world circling voyage of the electrically propelled American freighter Eclipse, which sailed hence on December 1, has been completed at Port Said, according to a letter received by the General Electric Company from an engineer, A. Starr of the Locomotive Superheater Company, who went along with the ship's engineering force as an observer. Mr. Starr said the trip of 5,122 miles without a single stop was the most interesting in his long experience.

"The chief engineer of the Eclipse," the letter said, "was very well satisfied with the performance of the entire equipment, and was especially pleased with the simplicity of its operation. The engineer's force is not above the average in experience, and therefore when we consider these facts and circumstances, together with the performance of the vessel, it is safe to say that no ship owner would make equipping his ship with this type of machinery. The engineers on watch operated the apparatus as easily as a motorman does a trolley car."

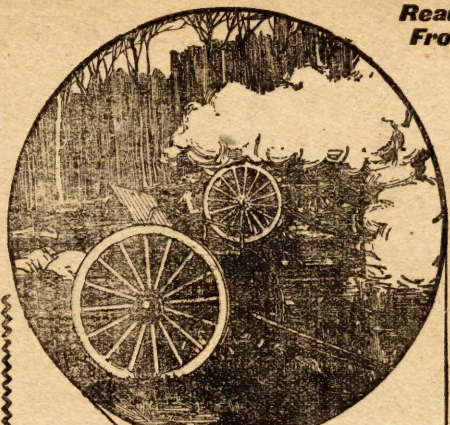
## GREATEST DISASTER IN ANNALS OF FORESTRY

Eight billion board feet of timber was destroyed by the cyclone that ripped a seventy-five mile path, thirty miles wide, through the forests of the Olympic peninsula, Washington State January 29. Reports from the Forest Service made public recently class the storm as "the greatest disaster ever recorded in the annals of forestry and lumbering."

The wind registered 132 miles an hour before instruments at the Weather Bureau station were destroyed. It is estimated to have reached 150 miles thereafter. Practically all standing timber over 2,250 square miles went down in a tangled mass obliterating roads and telegraph lines and with little chance of salvage.

No human lives were lost, but buildings were destroyed and many animals perished, including elk.

"If fire should gain headway in the devastated area," the forester reported, "the most stupendous conflagration ever known in this country would result. Fifteen billion feet (of timber) is exposed in the adjoining part of the Olympic national forest."

## Read These Letters From Happy Boys:

**Shows Clear Pictures**

I have been very slow in sending you an answer. I received my Moving Picture Machine a few weeks ago and I think it is a dandy, and it shows the pictures clear just as you said it would. I am very proud of it. I thank you very much for it and I am glad to have it. I gave an entertainment two days after I got it. Leopold Lamontagne, 54 Summer Ave., Central Falls, R. I.

**Sold His for $10.00 and Ordered Another**

Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for $10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Ehereth, Mandan, N. Dak.

**Would Not Give Away for $25.00**

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for $25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Breaky, Jeanesville, Pa. Box 34.

**Better Than a $12.00 Machine**

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a $12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greenboro, N. C.

## A Real Moving Picture Show in Your Own Home

# NEW ELECTRIC MODEL

**Remember, this is a Genuine Moving Picture Machine** and the motion pictures are clear, sharp and distinct.

The Moving Picture Machine is finely constructed, and carefully put together by skilled workmen. It is made of Russian Metal, has a beautiful finish, and is operated by a finely constructed mechanism, consisting of an eight wheel movement, etc. The projecting lenses are carefully ground and adjusted, triple polished, standard double extra reflector, throwing a ray of light many feet, and enlarging the picture on the screen up to three or four feet in area.

It is not a toy; it is a solidly constructed and durable Moving Picture Machine. The mechanism is exceedingly simple and is readily operated by the most inexperienced. The pictures shown by this marvelous Moving Picture Machine are not the common, crude and lifeless Magic Lantern variety, but are life-like photographic reproductions of actual scenes, places and people, which never tire its audiences. This Moving Picture Machine has caused a rousing enthusiasm wherever it is used.

This Moving Picture Machine which I want to send you FREE, gives clear and life-like Moving Pictures as are shown at any regular Moving Picture show. It flashes moving pictures on the sheet before you. This Machine and Box of Film are FREE—absolutely free to every boy in this land who wants to write for an Outfit, free to girls and free to older people. Read MY OFFER below, which shows you how to get this Marvelous Machine.

## How You Can Get This Great Moving Picture Machine—Read My Wonderful Offer to You

**HERE IS** what you are to do in order to get this amazing Moving Picture Machine and the real Moving Pictures: Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail to-day. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. These pictures are printed in many colors and among the titles are such subjects as *"Betsy Ross Making the First American Flag"*—*"Washington at Home,"*—*"Battle of Lake Erie," etc.* I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 40-cent offer among the people you know. When you have distributed the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected $8.00. Send the $8.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the Moving Picture Machine with complete Outfit and the Box of Film.

**50,000 of these machines have made 50,000 boys happy. Answer at once. Be the first in your town to get one.**

**A. E. FLEMING, Secy.,**
**615 W. 43d Street, Dept. 142, New York**

PLEASE USE COUPON

## Free Coupon

**Good for Moving Picture Offer**

Simply cut out this Free Coupon, pin it to a sheet of paper, mail to me with your name and address written plainly, and I will send you the 20 Pictures at once. Address

**A. E. FLEMING, Secy.,**
**615 W. 43d St., Dept. 142, New York**

# Ford Auto GIVEN AWAY

SOLVE this puzzle, win Ford Auto votes free. The letters of the alphabet are numbered: A is 1, B is 2, and so on. The figures in the little squares to the left represent four words. (20 is the letter "T".) What are the four words? Can you work it out? If so, send your answer quick. Surely you want this fine, new Ford auto. Send no money with solution. I have already given away many autos.

**SEND ANSWER TO-DAY**

We not only give away this Ford auto, but hundreds of dollars in cash and scores of other valuable prizes. Bicycles, Guns, Watches, Talking Machines, something for everybody. Everyone who answers this can have a prize. There are no losers. Nothing difficult to do. Everybody wins. Someone gets this new, latest model Ford Auto free. Why not you? Write today and be first.

Do You Want It?

AUTO STEVENS, 141 W. Ohio Street, Dept. 2464 Chicago, Ill.



# New Hair Growth After BALDNESS

On legal affidavit, John Hart Brittain, business man, certified to this: "My head at the top and back was absolutely bald. The scalp was shiny. An expert said that he thought the hair roots were extinct, and there was no hope of my ever having a new hair growth.

"Yet now, at an age over 66, I have a luxuriant growth of soft, strong, lustrous hair! No trace of baldness. The pictures shown here are from my photographs." Mr. Brittain certified further:

*After hair growth*

## INDIAN'S SECRET OF HAIR GROWTH

*Photo when bald,*

"At a time when I had become discouraged at trying various hair lotions, tonics, specialists' treatments, etc., I came across, in my travels, a Cherokee Indian 'medicine man' who had an elixir that he asseverated would grow my hair. Although I had but little faith, I gave it a trial. To my amazement a light fuzz soon appeared. It developed, day by day, into a healthy growth, and ere long my hair was as prolific as in my youthful days.

*That I was astonished and happy is expressing my state of mind mildly.*

Obviously, the hair roots had not been dead, but were dormant in the scalp, awaiting the fertilizing potency of the mysterious pomade.

I negotiated for and came into possession of the principle for preparing this mysterious elixir, now called Kotalko, and later had the recipe put into practical form by a chemist.

That my own hair growth was permanent has been amply proved."

## How YOU May Grow YOUR Hair

It has been proved in very many cases that hair roots did not die even when the hair fell out through dandruff, fever, *alopecia areata* or certain other hair or scalp disorders. Miss A. D. Otto reports: "About 8 years ago my hair began to fall out until my scalp in spots was almost entirely bald. I used everything that was recommended but was always disappointed until at last I came across Kotalko. My bald spots are being covered now; the growth is already about three inches." G. W. Mitchell reports: "I had spots completely bald, over which hair is now growing since I used Kotalko." Mrs. Matilda Maxwell reports: "The whole front of my head was as bald as the palm of my hand for about 15 years. Since using Kotalko, hair is growing all over the place that was bald." Many more splendid, convincing reports from satisfied users.

*Kotalko is wonderful for women's hair.*

**KOTALKO**
FOR FALLING HAIR
BALDNESS, DANDRUFF
*For Sale at all Busy Drug Stores*

**KOTALKO** contains GENUINE BEAR OIL and other potent ingredients. No alcohol, no shampoo; but a hair elixir of wonderful efficacy. All ingredients are safe and harmless, even for a child's scalp and hair. Positively KOTALKO is one delightfully reliable hair preparation that succeeds upon genuine merit. Buy a box of KOTALKO at the drug store. Or ask for Kotalko at the toilet goods or drug counter of any large department store. Remember the name. Accept nothing else as "just as good." $300.00 GUARANTEE. Or if you send 10 cents (silver or stamps), you will receive a PROOF BOX of Kotalko with BROCHURE, postpaid. Determine NOW to eliminate DANDRUFF, to treat BALDNESS, to STOP HAIR FROM FALLING. Get a box of guaranteed KOTALKO, apply once or twice daily; watch in your mirror. For PROOF BOX (10 cents, none otherwise) write to

**KOTALKO OFFICES, BA-374, Station X, New York**


## HAIR NETS CROSS OCEAN THREE TIMES.

Although the traffic in human hair has not been so brisk during the past few years as formerly on account of the veering of the fashions in hairdressing toward the extremest simplicity, still there are millions of pounds of human hair exported from China.

The hair-net business has become of great importance to the province of Shantung, which now provides practically the entire supply for the market. Thus the hair net worn by the veriest stay-at-home in America has doubtless crossed the ocean three times.

Since the abolition of the queues after the recent fall of the Manchu dynasty, long pig tails of Chinese hair are no longer readily available. The dealers are relying more and more on the combings of women, although there are men who make it a part of their business to let their hair grow to about eight inches in length and then sell it to the barber who in turn sells it to the small trader in hair. For exporting, hair is assorted according to length and tied in bunches. Most of the exports go to England, France and the United States.

## BE SURE TO READ

# "Moving Picture Stories"

**A Weekly Magazine Devoted to Photoplays and Players.**

**PRICE SEVEN CENTS PER COPY**

*The Best Film Magazine on Earth*

FOR SALE ON ALL NEWS-STANDS.

**Magnificent Colored Cover Portraits of Prominent Screen Performers!**

**32 PAGES OF READING** **OUT EVERY FRIDAY**

Each Number Contains Portraits and Biographies of Actors and Actresses—Four Stories of the Best Films on the Screens—Elegant Half-tone Scenes from the Plays—Interesting Articles About Prominent People in the Films—Doings of Actors and Actresses in the Studios—Lessons in Scenario Writing—Poems, Jokes and every bright Feature of Interest in Making Moving Pictures.

**THIS LITTLE MAGAZINE GIVES YOU MORE FOR YOUR MONEY THAN ANY OTHER SIMILAR PUBLICATION ON THE MARKET.**

Its authors are the very best that money can procure; its profuse illustrations are exquisite, and its special articles are by the greatest experts in their particular line. No amount of money is spared to make this publication the very best of its kind in the world. Buy a copy NOW from your newsdealer, or send 7 cents in money or postage-stamps, and we will mail you, postage free, any issue you desire.

**HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher,** **166 West 23d Street, New York City**